











THE  
CHURCH AND ITS ORGANIZATION  
IN  
PRIMITIVE AND CATHOLIC TIMES

By the Same Author.

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# THE CHURCH AND ITS ORGANIZATION

IN  
PRIMITIVE AND CATHOLIC TIMES

AN INTERPRETATION  
OF RUDOLPH SOHM'S *KIRCHENRECHT*

BY  
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To  
MY MOTHER

FROM WHOM I HAVE LEARNED

THE BROADEST AND DEEPEST THINGS ABOUT

THE CHURCH

WHO IN MY YOUTH DEDICATED ME

TO THE MINISTRY

AND HAS EVER PROMPTED IN ME THE SPIRIT OF

SERVICE



## P R E F A C E

IN turning to the Preface one is likely to seek first of all an answer to the query, What is the significance of entitling this book an "Interpretation" of Sohm's *Ecclesiastical Law*?

This implies, however, a preliminary question: What of Sohm himself, and what of his work?

Dr. Rudolph Sohm, Professor in the Juristic Faculty of the University of Leipsic, is best known in this country as a writer upon Roman law, and by the few students among us who follow this branch of study he is recognized as one of the most able and suggestive of teachers. His work on the *Institutes of Roman Law* has been translated into English from the Fourth German Edition,—first ed. Oxford, 1892, second ed. 1901. But his work in Church history is not altogether unknown, for a brief, popular book of his, entitled *Kirchengeschichte im Grundriss*, has been translated into English under the title, *Outlines of Church History*, Macmillan & Co., 1895 (1901), from the Eighth Revised German Edition of 1893. It is therefore all the more remarkable that his greatest and most noted work is almost unknown in England and America:—it has not been translated; it has not even been reviewed, so far as I know; and of the many scholars who, since the publication of his book, have written in English upon the subject of Church organization, almost none (McGiffert and Schmiedel

being the only exceptions I am aware of) give the least hint that they are acquainted with the far-reaching results of a study which constitutes at the very least a new point of departure for all future investigations into the character of primitive Christianity and the development of the Catholic organization.

This strange neglect is perhaps due in part to the fact that the title of Sohm's book does not clearly suggest the character of its contents. Of the whole work, entitled *Kirchenrecht*, only the first volume, *Die Geschichtlichen Grundlagen* (1892), has yet appeared. This part, as its title indicates, is substantially an *introduction* to the study of ecclesiastical law; but it is a voluminous introduction, comprising seven hundred large octavo pages. Writers upon ecclesiastical law are not wont to press their inquiries back to the origins of Church institutions, to consider the nature of the Church of God, or the character and significance of the early Christian ministry, — still less to raise the primary question whether there is justification for law of any sort in the Ecclesia. It is not strange, therefore, that students of early Christian institutions have not imagined that a work bearing such a title might come within their province.

But this is only a partial explanation of the neglect of Sohm's work. The fact is rather significant of the *narrow* acquaintance of English-speaking scholars with German theological literature. The influence of German scholarship upon America is great, in certain provinces it is paramount, — too great, I cannot but think. But while the latest works in Biblical criticism and the works of those few scholars who have gained a popular fame in England and America are eagerly



translated while they are still wet from the press, the most important works in other fields of study are only tardily recognized. This is especially true in the field of early Church history, in which German scholarship has confessedly the preëminence. The situation is, indeed, readily explained by the fact that there are few students of this subject in America:—comparatively few of the many students who go to the German universities to complete their training devote themselves expressly to this study, while English scholars are in general less disposed to turn for illumination to the Continent.

Upon its appearance in 1892, Sohm's book was at once recognized in Germany as an epoch-making work. A considerable literature of criticism and comment has already grown up about it. No independent study of the subject has since appeared, and it is safe to add that no work is likely to be produced which does not found itself substantially upon Sohm's results. Sohm's most radical critic confesses the charm and power of his work, accepts in the main his historical results, and acknowledges that he has thrown new light upon innumerable points, and explained many of the problems that have hitherto been regarded as the most obscure in the study of early Church organization;—nay, more, he proclaims that "any one, be he jurist or theologian, who would to-day study seriously the subject of ecclesiastical law, must make himself acquainted with Sohm's book, as the most notable production of modern times in the sphere of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, and must take his stand with relation to it" (Kahl, *Lehrsystem des Kirchenrechts*, 1894, pp. 71, sqq.). This, as an example, may suffice to show that it is not for lack

of appreciation at home that Sohm's work has failed to gain recognition abroad.

To say that my work is an interpretation is not to imply that Sohm's book is obscure. On the contrary, it is a masterpiece of clear and cogent argumentation, expressed in the most classic German idiom. I hope that my book may prompt others to draw directly from this stimulating source, and I could wish to see in English a literal translation of the whole of it. But a German book is not completely rendered into English when it is merely translated. The difference of intellectual atmosphere has to be taken into account; and to adapt a book to the specific interests and uses of our own situation,—in this case our religious situation,—it may be necessary to alter both emphasis and proportion. I have made liberal use of the material of Sohm's work, but I have dealt with it very freely. I defend in the main the same thesis, but I defend it in my own way. If any one find my argument inconclusive, it is to be hoped that he will not dismiss a case of so great importance without hearing also the senior counsel. If, however, I may claim that my work is an improvement upon Sohm's, this is no more than to say that, considering the different interests I have in view, I dare count myself justified both in the additions I have made and in the omissions. As an introduction to ecclesiastical law, it is natural that Sohm's book should deal chiefly with the later development of Church institutions, both Catholic and Protestant. I have reversed that proportion. In this first volume I have considered at far greater length than does Sohm the notion of the Church and the development of organization in the primitive age, this being a subject which has a closer practical bearing

upon our present-day religious problems, and is more likely to enlist a popular interest. In the second volume I propose to present a *brief* account than Sohm gives of the Catholic development. The extent of my dependence upon Sohm can hardly be stated quantitatively, but some notion of it may be derived from the fact that this first volume of nearly 400 pages corresponds roughly to a chapter of 156 pages in Sohm's work, while even of that there is about a third of which I have taken no account. My more specific obligations to Sohm I have invariably noted in the context. I may remark here that even where I have followed him most closely I have discarded the innumerable references which he makes to modern German authors and to discussions with which the English reader cannot be supposed to be familiar.

More than one third of Sohm's work is devoted to a discussion of the development of ecclesiastical law since the Reformation — particularly in Germany. This, of course, I have omitted. But in lieu thereof I have given in the Introduction a succinct account of the principles which determined the development of English denominationalism. This may serve at once to reveal the need of a reconstruction of our view of early Christian institutions, and to point the application of the historical results which are set forth in this book. The neglect into which the study of early Church government has fallen among American Protestants I cannot but attribute to the mere despair of arriving at any concordant and convincing conclusions about the principles which determined the organization of the primitive Church. But I cannot acquiesce in such despair, nor can I repress the hope that earnest and can-

did study may help to dissipate the barriers of prejudice which now divide Protestant Christendom. Those who do not resent our divisions, and who like no criticism of denominational institutions, will spare themselves annoyance by beginning with Chapter II.

My precise relation to Sohm's book will be the better understood, and I hope justified, if I may be permitted to narrate the circumstances which led me to use it as I have. I first read the book in 1893, during the first year of a course of study in Germany. I read it then with the more interest because the subject was one which I had long studied intently, and which had lately become to me a matter of personal and practical concern. This study has remained one of my most engrossing avocations, and in all the work I have since done upon it I have been profoundly influenced by Sohm's book. Sohm's influence, however, has been in the main an unconscious one, and when I started to prepare a work on Church organization, I was quite unaware of the extent of my obligation. It was not till I had actually begun to write that I re-read his book, and recognized to my dismay that many of the results which I accounted substantial contributions of my own were rightly his peculiar property. Nothing was left for me but to beg permission to make free use of the material of Professor Sohm's book, — a request which was at once granted by both the author and his publisher in the most generous spirit and on the most liberal terms. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for such permission. For it has enabled me not only greatly to enrich my book, but to claim expressly the support of so distinguished an authority. At the same time I am bound to disclaim for Sohm all responsibility for opin-



ions which are not here expressly referred to him. I have made the freest use of the liberal terms of his permission. The form of the work is almost totally independent: I have adhered in the main, particularly in this volume, to the original plan which I sketched before I had any thought of reference to Sohm. I have omitted without notice many interpretations which seemed to me unsound, and I have explicitly stated my disagreement with some of the opinions which Sohm may count of capital importance. All of these changes seem to me to add strength to the main position, and at all events my work may claim the value which belongs to a candid reinvestigation.

Many a writer will sympathize with an embarrassment — by no means unusual except in degree — which I encountered in the preparation of this work. I had planned and prepared to include a full study of the early doctrine and ritual of the Eucharist, a discussion of the principles of common worship in the Church, and a history of English sectarian controversy about organization and ritual. The pertinency and congruence of all these themes will be recognized by whoever reads this book. But at the same time it will be recognized that the plan of including them all in a single volume was not practicable. I am well satisfied to substitute the brief account of the principles of sectarian division which I have included in the Introduction, in place of a fuller history of so painful a subject. The studies I have made upon the other subjects I hope to publish in a separate work, and I have treated them here only so far as the present argument demands. But even as thus restricted, my theme has proved too large for a single volume. And this is due chiefly to the fact

that the opinions maintained in this work are too novel to be advanced without detailed proof.

The present volume, however, is complete in itself, as a study of the primitive institutions of the Church. The second volume will treat of the characteristic developments of *Catholicism*, under the following heads: Chapter V. *The Diocese*; Chapter VI. *Synods and Councils*; Chapter VII. *The Metropolitan, the Patriarch, and the Pope*. This, too, may properly be considered an independent theme, though the most distinctive feature of my representation of the subject (which is again Sohm's) is the proof that the whole development of Catholic institutions was conditioned by ideas which, perverted as they were, may be traced back to the very beginnings of Christianity. The first part of this work therefore constitutes the foundation of the second, and the second substantiates the first.

I am sorry that Principal Lindsay's work, *The Church and the Ministry*, London, 1902, did not reach me until April of this year,—too late to be noticed in this book. It is especially significant as the only considerable treatment of this subject from a Presbyterian source. It also displays a broader acquaintance with modern studies and recently discovered sources of information than does any other work in English. It is therefore all the more disappointing to note the controversial temper in which it is written, and its shallow conception of the problems which it handles. The importance of Sohm's work here at last receives express recognition; but it is neither adequately understood nor fairly interpreted.

WALTER LOWRIE.

KEENE VALLEY, IN THE ADIRONDACKS,  
July, 1903.

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# THE CHURCH AND ITS ORGANIZATION

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### § 1, DENOMINATIONAL CONTROVERSY CHIEFLY CONCERNED WITH QUESTIONS OF FORM

THE Protestant controversies which it here imports to consider, by way of introduction to the study of THE CHURCH AND THE MINISTRY, are such as relate, not to the nature of the Church of God, but to the ministry of the Church; and here again it is not so much the *nature* of the Christian ministry that has been at issue, as the *form* of its constitution, the *form of Church government*. There has not lacked controversy about the nature of the Church and the nature of the ministry, but it is the form of Church organization, the form of the ministry, which has chiefly engrossed attention, because this is an issue which is obvious to all and of practical moment to many. This question was not seriously debated during the first age of the Reformation; but, being once raised, it became the issue which has divided Protestantism. The controversy has not been conducted altogether without reference to higher considerations; but they, for the most part, have been imported into it and remain essentially foreign to it.

In reality, the form enshrines no truth : various considerations, religious or secular, theoretical or practical, such as from age to age seemed best to comport with the spirit of the time, have been urged in justification of it, — but it is the form alone that persists.

The best illustration of this fact is the history of the controversy between the Church of England and the Dissenters. In the first stage of this controversy we have the rigoristic Puritanism of Cartwright and Travers, with its *jure divino* Presbyterianism, its apostolic succession through the presbytery, the power of the keys shared, according to divine institution, by ruling and teaching elders ; opposed to the liberal (humanistic) Episcopalianism of Whitgift and Hooker, defended on the plea of expediency, good order, monarchical policy, and as not repugnant to Scripture. In the second stage we have the same rigoristic Puritanism in the Westminster Assembly — though hopelessly divided now between the claims of *jure divino* “classical presbyteries,” and *jure divino* Independency ; opposed this time to the equally rigoristic claims of Hall and Laud for Episcopacy by divine institution. To-day the claims of Laud are exceeded, the Non-Jurors are outdone ; for, by a larger section of the Anglican Churches than ever before, the exclusive power of the keys, the exclusive apostolic succession, the chief (if not the exclusive) authority to rule the Church, is ascribed to the episcopate — *jure divino* ; and opposed to this, what have we for the most part but the claim of expediency in behalf of Presbyterian government (feebly made, though so well proved), the plea that it is in harmony with the principles of republican government, and in none of its details repugnant to Scripture ! The doctrine of the ministry changes, the form remains.



The formal nature of this issue was never so generally recognized as now. Few of those who still call themselves Protestants make an exclusive claim for their ministry, — that is, refuse to recognize the validity of a ministry otherwise constituted. The changed attitude of Presbyterians and Congregationalists has just been referred to. The great Methodist society was organized expressly upon the principle of indifference (religiously considered) to the form of the ministry, — an indifference like that of the Lutherans (Moravians), and directly traceable to them. Significant also of a certain amount of indifference to form is the judgment of the “Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion, holden at Lambeth Palace in July, 1888,” proposing as the basis of Church unity “the Historic Episcopate, *locally adapted* in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples,” etc.<sup>1</sup>

The form of government is, of course, both as a matter of fact and as a matter of principle indifferent to the faith: every variety of belief found among Trinitarian Protestants is harbored under the form of Anglican Episcopacy. It is the formal nature of the issue which is at once the hope and the despair of Christian unity: so trivial a difference! yet so insuperable a barrier! The forms which persist in spite of changed faiths, persist also in spite of a change in spirit, in spite of the growth of charity, and sincere zeal for union. The form persists just because it is *form*, and as such stands in no relation to the spiritual forces which operate in the Church; it persists because it is a *legal* fact, and as such stands in irreconcilable contradiction to the nature of the Church, — here not in the familiar con-

<sup>1</sup> See note A at the end of this section.

trast of law and grace, or law and liberty, but of law and *spirit*.

The Church depends upon essential reality, upon the instant and constant proclamation of God's Word, God's Will, in spirit and in truth : law on the other hand depends in principle upon form (hence the adage, *summum jus summa injuria*), and it must depend upon form if it would free itself from the influences of the moment, and found its decisions upon established, traditional, and generally valid principles. A particular form of the ministry is established by law in every denomination. That it is in a measure recognized and protected by law *without* the Church (Civil, Common, or Statute Law) is of little importance in this connection ; but it is of the utmost importance that the form of ministry is established by law *within* the Church, by ecclesiastical law (Canon Law).

Again, *force* is implied in the very idea of law ; whereas the nature of the Church abhors compulsion, because only the free apprehension of the divine is of spiritual value. Faith, and all that belongs to the spiritual sphere, cannot be compelled ; and the laws which have been devised for coercion have proved in the main as futile as they are misdirected. The faith has always changed *before* the terms of creed subscription have been altered. None were ever more confidently determined to enforce faith by law than the Calvinistic Churches of Great Britain and America : — with a result which deserves to be remembered as a classical instance in proof of my contention. The form of Church government, on the other hand, is worldly, it belongs to the sphere of law ; it is essentially, as it is commonly called, a *polity*, and as such it *can* be enforced.



A. Local adaptation of the historic episcopate is proposed by the so-called Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. How much this *local adaptation* may mean, we may get a notion from Bishop Gore, the most noteworthy of the modern Anglican expounders of the Catholic doctrine — and history — of the ministry. In his *Christian Ministry* (1889), p. 143, he says, of the presbyters of the Church of Alexandria in the second and third centuries: "They were not only presbyters with the ordinary commission of the presbyter, but also bishops *in posse*." That this doctrinaire theory is not casually developed by the exigency of controversy, to meet a pressing objection, is shown by the fact that on p. 72 it is laid down as a general principle, that "It is a matter of very great importance to exalt the principle of apostolic succession above the question of the exact form of the ministry," and on p. 73, "No one, of whatever part of the Church, can maintain that what may be called, for lack of a distinctive term, *monepiscopacy* is essential to the continuity of the Church." Here at last a theological principle is uppermost; for the apostolic succession is *one way* of accounting for and justifying the *divine authority* of the ministry. Still more significant are the later utterances of another high-churchman, Dr. John Wordsworth, Bishop of Salisbury, *The Ministry of Grace* (1901). In relation to this same problem of the Alexandrian episcopacy in the third century he observes (p. 125), "that in two of the greatest Church centres, closely connected with one another, namely Rome and Alexandria, episcopacy did not grow with the rapidity which marked its progress in Palestine, Syria, and Asia." I dissent from the statement of fact, — but that is not to the point here. On p. 128: "In the Church Order that bears the name of Hippolytus, and which is probably Roman, but rather before his time, and may be dated *circa* A. D. 200, we find two remarkable rules: first, that 'one of the Bishops and Presbyters' is to be chosen to say the prayer and to lay hands upon the person to be ordained; and, second, that the same prayer is to be used both for a Bishop and a Presbyter, but with only a change in the title. It is also laid down (ch. 32) 'that a Bishop in all things is to be considered equal to a Presbyter, except in the name of

the throne and in the [matter of] ordination, because the power of ordination is not given to him' (*i. e.* to the Presbyter). This looks as if the prerogatives implied by the two titles were now being distinguished in the Church of Rome, while as yet this distinction had not been carried very far. . . . It is not clear whether he needed a further ordination if he were already a presbyter of the Roman Church." On opp. 139 *sq.* he accepts the common reading of the thirteenth canon of Ancyra (A.D. 314), "which seems to recognize a certain power of ordination in City-presbyters, bringing it into line with Episcopal supremacy, without actually abolishing it, by requiring a written licence from the Bishop before its exercise." But on p. 141 he divests this of its historical significance by positing (like Gore) the theory that "the City-presbyters at Rome and Alexandria, and very probably elsewhere, were members of an Episcopal College, acting usually through their president in the matter of ordination." On p. 142 he sums up his conclusions in part as follows: "That in some other parts, especially at Rome and Alexandria, there were at first [that is, until about the end of the second century] only two orders, the governing order acting normally as a corporate body or College; that in process of time, and more particularly in the course of the third century, the governing order tended more and more to act through its Presidents; that in this way the governing order in the West has been differentiated into two degrees, though a tradition has always been kept up that they had an essential unity of character, now defined as 'Priesthood' or 'sacerdotium.' Not only has this tradition never been condemned by the Church, but it is probably a growing belief; and it has much to recommend it as a practical basis for that reunion between Episcopalians and Presbyterians which is one of the most obviously necessary tasks of English-speaking Christianity." As will appear subsequently, I differ totally from the Bishop of Salisbury as to the inference which is to be drawn from these facts concerning the primitive relation of bishops and presbyters. He follows approximately St. Jerome's theory,—as to the influence and authority of which see note B, p. 23.

It is germane, however, to the present context to observe that

the opinion of the Bishop of Salisbury is in conformity with Anglican traditions. The prevailing opinion of Anglican theologians in the past (there is no Anglican dogma on the subject) has *not* been opposed to the so-called Roman doctrine, — though this is now commonly affirmed. It was a long time before the opinion gained ground that the episcopate is an *order* distinct from the presbyterate. This notion is not to be inferred from the Preface to the English Ordinal ( “that from the Apostles’ time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ’s Church, — Bishops, Priests, and Deacons”), for it is well known that the word *ordo* was loosely used even at the end of the Middle Ages, and the word occurs more than once in relation to bishops in Roman formularies. It would indeed have been a strange thing had the Anglican Church adopted a more rigorous view of the exclusive powers of the episcopate than the Roman had ever *formulated*. We have also to recognize the influence of St. Jerome’s theory, which the Puritan controversialists did not suffer the Anglican divines to forget, — if they were so minded. It is remarkable how often the citation occurs “as Jerome saith in his epistle to Evagrius.” On both sides the theory was accepted as an axiom. The preponderating — well nigh universal — opinion of Anglican divines in the first age of the English Reformation was in agreement with Jerome’s statement. In the *Institution of a Christian Man*, put forth by the bishops and clergy in 1537, it is said (speaking of “the sacrament of orders” to be administered by the bishop, and noticing the various orders in the Church of Rome): “The truth is, that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons or ministers, and of priests or bishops;” and throughout, when speaking of the jurisdiction and privileges of the ministry, it attributes them to “priests or bishops,” asserting expressly “that this office, this power and authority, was given by Christ unto certain persons only, that is to say, unto priests or bishops.” Again in the revision of this work set forth by the king in 1543 under the title, *A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man*, priests and bishops are spoken of as of the same order. In the autumn of 1540 certain questions were

proposed by the king to the chief bishops and divines of the day, of which the tenth was this: "Whether bishops or priests were first? and if the priests were first, then the priest made the bishop." Cranmer replied: "The bishops and priests were at one time, and were not two things, but both one office, in the beginning of Christ's religion." Lee, Archbishop of York, said: "The name of a bishop is not properly a name of order, but a name of office." Bonner, Bishop of London, said, referring to Jerome: "In the beginning of the Church there was none (or, if it were, very small) difference between a bishop and a priest, especially touching the signification." To like effect answered Barlow, Bishop of St. David's, Thirlby, Bishop elect of Westminster, and a number of notable divines. The documents are reported in Burnet's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, addendum 5 to pt. I., and, among the Records to pt. I. bk. III., no. 21, quest. 10. In Elizabeth's reign Dr. Alley, Bishop of Exeter, in his Prelections on 1 Peter, read publicly in St. Paul's in the year 1560, quotes Jerome to prove the original identity of presbyter and bishop. So also does Dr. Pilkington, in his *Confutation of an Addition* (*Works*, p. 494, ed. Parker Soc.). Bishop Jewell was the one who best of all understood the Catholic tradition, and in his *Def. of Apol.*, pt. II. c. 9, div. I. (*Works*, p. 202, cf. p. 85) he quotes Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose (Ambrosiaster), and St. Paul in support of the position "that by the Scriptures of God a bishop and a priest are all one." Archbishop Whitgift, in controversy with Cartwright (*Def. of Answ. to Adm.*, 1574, p. 383), was more guarded — and more accurate: "Every bishop is a priest, but every priest hath not the name and title of a bishop, in that meaning that Jerome in this place taketh the name of a bishop. . . . Neither shall you find this word *episcopus* commonly used but for that priest that is in degree over and above the rest." There is no need to multiply instances of this sort. It is well known that the bishops acted upon these principles by recognizing the presbyterian ordination of ministers who came from the Continent.

On the other hand, the fact is that the Roman doctrine is *substantially* what the Anglican has been assumed to be. It is



well known that the doctrine of the sacrament of orders was worked up by the Schoolmen. The tradition forbade them to reckon the episcopate as a special order; but they strove nevertheless to vindicate to it a higher and separate position, as by Christ's institution. Duns Scotus taught that the episcopal consecration constituted a separate sacrament. But most of the theologians justified the superior power of the bishop, not on sacramental grounds (*potestas ordinis*), but from the side of jurisdiction (*potestas jurisdictionis*), — though, according to the Catholic view, they accounted it none the less *jure divino* for this distinction. The episcopate now counts in the Roman Church as a higher degree (*gradus*) within the *sacerdotium*. It is not strange that the high-Anglican divines of a later generation than those quoted above, being unable to avail themselves of this distinction, because the *potestas jurisdictionis* had come to imply (to them) a *potestas jure humano*, should break with the tradition (perhaps more or less unconsciously) and assert a separate order of the episcopate. This is undoubtedly what is now commonly meant by the popular "phrase the threefold ministry."

## § 2, LEGALIZED CHRISTIANITY

But no satisfying idea of the Church as a *legally constituted* society has ever been formulated, nor ever can be; for a legal constitution (whether *jure humano* or *jure divino*) is opposed to the nature of the Church. It is here the "visible Church" that is meant, the kingdom of God, which "is not of this world," and never can be ruled by worldly means (by a polity conformable to the kingdoms of this world), but only by God's Spirit. And yet the one point upon which all denominations of Christians are united (except the society of Friends) is the belief that some form or another of ecclesiastical polity (legally constituted organization) is divinely prescribed, or at the very least is practically

necessary for the maintenance of a visible Church of Christ; and, further, that some legal constitution has from the beginning been in force.

The assertions which I make in this section I do not posit as assumptions, for I cannot presume that they will be granted at this point: I state them as the *thesis*, of which this whole work may be taken as the proof.<sup>1</sup> But here it may well be pointed out, that the persistence of Church polities since the Reformation (in the midst of so many and such great changes), and the millennium long endurance of the Catholic polity, which has no historic parallel except in the venerable institutions of the Chinese Empire, render it well nigh inconceivable that such a development could ever have been accomplished as we assume to have taken place almost without contest about the turn of the second century (in the rise of the monarchical episcopate), or such as we can clearly trace in the third and fourth centuries (the development of metropolitan and papal authority); — it is impossible, I say, that such developments could have so taken place, *if the earlier order which was superseded had been legally established*. That is to say: if the privileges and authority which were enjoyed by a plurality of bishops in the congregation had been accounted theirs by *right* (in the strict sense — as depending upon a fact in the past which was uncontrollable in the present), the authority of the single bishop could not have been established, or at least not without a contest which would have left imperishable traces. Similarly, if the equal authority in the Church which

<sup>1</sup> I have here tried to state accurately the thesis of Sohm's book, to which I have made due acknowledgment in the Preface. I repeat the hope that, if anything is here lacking in accuracy of statement or in cogency of proof, Sohm's work may be consulted for correction and supplement.



was enjoyed by all diocesan bishops in the third century had been legally secured to them,—that is, if the Church had been legally organized, as the diocese or parish already was,—metropolitan, patriarchal, or papal authority could not have been successfully asserted. The legal organization of the Church developed gradually: it first laid hold of the local community, then of the province, then of the Church, the end and aim of the Catholic development being attained in the Papacy.

In the subjection of the Christian society to the terms of a legal constitution, Sohm sees the essence of Catholicism. This principle reaches much further than the province of Canon Law, to which Sohm directly applies it: if it is accepted, it involves a fundamental reconstruction of the modern view of early Church history,—particularly with regard to the problem which confronts us in the passage from primitive Christianity to Early Catholicism.<sup>2</sup> Without denying the influence of Greek thought upon the Church (and even upon St. Paul), the fact must to many appear inadequate as a solution for the problem we have to meet. Some are dissatisfied with this solution because they recognize that the development of the Church, even in departing from primitive ideals, was a unique fact, a free creation of the Christian faith, fundamen-

<sup>2</sup> This problem, it is well known, was first clearly recognized by F. Chr. Baur, though his solution was inadequate:—"Catholicism is the synthesis of Judaistic and Pauline Christianity." Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*, 2nd ed. 1857, proposed another solution, which has had ever since a controlling influence upon the study of early Church history, and is now accepted by most of those who do not ignore the problem:—"Catholicism is Christianity (particularly Pauline Christianity) Hellenized." Renan (particularly *Les Apôtres*, and *L'Église chrétienne*) was the first to emphasize the influence of the models of secular government upon the organization of the Church.

tally determined by motives inherent in Christianity. Sohm, while he sees in the legalizing of Christian institutions a radical departure from primitive ideals, which he attributes to want of faith in the guidance of the Spirit, recognizes at the same time that the character of legalized (Catholic) Christianity was conditioned essentially by the primitive conception of the nature of the Church. The legal constitution of the Church *must* assume monarchical form; because from the beginning the Church was ruled by Christ's Spirit, by Christ's Word, *through* the men whom he had charismatically endowed to speak in his stead. That is to say, the officers of the Church are the representatives of Christ (God), not the representatives of the congregation. Thus also, ecclesiastical law — if law there be — can only be regarded as an authority *jure divino*, because no other law is of force in the Church but God's law. Again, and partly as a deduction from the above, all law in the Church is Church law, ecclesiastical law, valid not merely for a local community (be it congregation, city, or province), but for the Church universal; because the idea of a separately organized local community was not contemplated by primitive Christianity. Hence the Catholic stress upon uniformity was in harmony with primitive ideals: the primitive Church was *intolerant*.

It will be recognized how far-reaching were the *religious* effects of this legalizing of Christianity when one reflects upon the profound questions which therein received an answer. This is forcibly presented by Sohm: "A spiritual conception dominates in Church history, the conception of the visible Church, a conception which is determined by the content of the Christian faith. Where is Christ, the Lord of Glory? Where

the people of Christ (the Ecclesia), in whose midst Christ is with all his spiritual gifts? Where is the visible Church? where the true Christianity?"<sup>3</sup> All turns upon the answer to this question. The answer which maintained its credit unquestioned throughout the first century is that which is recorded in the Gospel (Matt. 18:20), "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Catholicism defined: Where the bishop is (with the presbyters and deacons), there is the Catholic Church, there is the Spirit of Christ and all his benefits, — *and there only*. The whole development of Catholicism lies implicit in that answer, — substantially the answer of Ignatius. It remained yet to be defined, Who is the bishop? It is he who is *rite* (legally) constituted; that is, elected, accepted, ordained, and inducted as the law prescribes.

It is easy to see how the sacraments, and all other spiritual possessions of the Church, were legalized by this process. That is a valid sacrament which is administered *rite* (according to legally ordained form) by one who is legally (*rite*) appointed to that ministry, — all others are void of spiritual effect.<sup>4</sup> Even the truth was legalized; indeed it was primarily for the sake of an objective criterion of truth that the legal constitution was established. At each stage of the development, as the legal organization extended from the local community to the universal Church, the answer sounded: The truth is what the bishop teaches — what is defined

<sup>3</sup> Sohm, p. x.

<sup>4</sup> According to medieval doctrine, by one who has himself validly received another sacrament; namely, that of sacerdotal order. To the strict consequences of this position baptism was later made an exception. The distinction between that which is invalid, and that which is merely irregular, according to the phrase, *factum valet, fieri non debet*, was foreign to early Catholicism.

by the council, "*legitime (!) congregata in Spirito Sancto*" — what is enunciated by the pope. And, after all, this *authorized* Christianity had only a negative value. The Catholic Church can assert — is authorized on Catholic principles in asserting — that there is no salvation outside of it; but it cannot, on formal juristic grounds, assure any individual that he is saved *within* it.<sup>5</sup>

### § 3, CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT CONTROVERSY

It is a remarkable and a significant fact that in the early Church, notwithstanding the critical changes that were effected, and the vast development of ecclesiastical organization, there was no controversy about the *form* of the ministry, — none at least which was important enough to leave definite traces upon the literature. It is this which makes our study of these changes so difficult. All seems to come about naturally, spontaneously, in response to forces which operated unchallenged. The first step was taken in view of what appeared to be an imperative practical necessity: — the preservation of the pure Gospel in the face of Gnosticism. Each succeeding step was prescribed by a logical necessity which was no less imperative.

In St. Clement's epistle to the Corinthians we do, indeed, get a hint of "strife over the name of the bishop's office" (c. xlv.); but the question at issue was merely, who should actually enjoy the privileges of the office.

<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted, that, except in the Western Church, the Catholic organization was arrested before it was complete: the Eastern churches are left without an ultimate, decisive answer, expressed in legal terms, to the question, Where is the Spirit of Christ? where is the people of God? what is the truth?



Even the epistles of Ignatius are not to be considered a propaganda for the establishment of a particular form of government, the monarchical episcopate: this they *assume* as already universally established, and they press the consequences. We may presume that Ignatius did not succeed in carrying through without contradiction his new interpretation<sup>1</sup> of the evangelical maxim, *ubi tres, ibi ecclesia*; but we do not hear the question raised controversially until we come to Tertullian the Montanist.<sup>2</sup> Hermas hints at a contest over "the chief seats" (rights of the presbyters); and he reveals his personal dissatisfaction with the position to which the prophets (himself being one) were already reduced in the Roman Church. But there was no serious controversy about the principle of prophetic rule in the Church until towards the end of the century, in the Montanistic movement; and by that time it already belonged to an order of things which in most communities had definitely passed away. In this controversy the Catholics did not attempt to traverse the principle of prophetic authority; they denied, *as a matter of fact*, the possession of this gift by the Montanist leaders. A kindred spirit of revolt against the Catholic externalizing of the idea of the Church made itself felt from time to time during the next three centuries, but it had even less to do with the form of Church organization. This movement has often been compared with English Puritanism, and it is therefore all the more significant to observe that it was a puritanism without any complaint against Catholic organization. Novatian, who had got himself consecrated at Rome as anti-bishop to Cornelius, was scrupulous to secure an ordination according to the Catholic rule. One of the results which emerged almost unno-

<sup>1</sup> *Smyrn.* 8: 10.

<sup>2</sup> *De exhort. castit.* 7.

ticed from this schism was the settlement of the principle that there can be but one bishop in a city. The Donatists, as is well known, retained the Catholic organization.

The development of metropolitan authority in the latter part of the fourth century surely did not come about without question; but such controversy as there was must have been individual, and we know nothing about it beyond the uncertain implications of a short notice in Eusebius.<sup>3</sup> As for the arrogant claims of the Bishop of Rome,—he could hardly boast anything which his compeers were not as ready to concede.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, to the absence of controversy here noted, St. Jerome is no exception; his famous dictum, that “among the ancients bishops and presbyters are the same, for the one is a term of dignity, the other of age,” was not made as a “challenge”<sup>5</sup> neither was it

<sup>3</sup> Euseb. *H. E.* VIII. 1:7, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* 3:3, The Roman Church is *maxima et antiquissima*, a gloriosissimis duobus apostolis constituta. Ad hanc enim ecclesiam propter potentiorē principatē necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam, hoc est eos, qui sunt undique fideles, in qua semper ab his, qui sunt undique, conservata est, ea quae est ab apostolis traditio. Like most modern interpreters, I suppose Irenaeus to be here stating merely the *fact* about Rome’s civic position as the centre of the Empire, and drawing pragmatic inferences from it;—not stating a doctrinal thesis. It was the civic *principatus* of the Roman Church, and its consequent *representative* character, which gave it religious preëminence in all doctrinal issues. Stronger are the expressions of Cyprian (*ep.* 38:3), who calls the Roman Church *ecclesiae catholicae matrix et radix*; and (*ep.* 59:14), *ad Petri cathedram atque ad ecclesiam principalem*, unde unitas sacerdotalis exorta est. The protest of Tertullian as a Montanist (*de pudic.* 1) is chiefly significant as indicating the height of the Roman pretention: *audio enim, edictum esse propositum . . . pontifex scilicet maximus, episcopus episcoporum edicit*,—that is Callistus. Cf. also Cyprian himself in controversy with the Roman Bishop Stephen (*Cypr. ep.* 71), and Firmilian of Caesarea (*Cypr. ep.* 75), who speaks of the *audacia et insolentia*, the *aperta et manifesta Stephani audacia*.

<sup>5</sup> As it is still called by Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 7, where he



controversial in the sense ordinarily supposed. St. Jerome writes as a biblical student and commentator, bringing to the notice of his age an exegetical fact which had hitherto been overlooked,—except by the anonymous commentator on St. Paul's Epistles, commonly called Ambrosiaster or the Ambrosian Hilary.<sup>6</sup> We are fortunately left in no doubt as to the exact measure of authority we must ascribe to this opinion. If St. Jerome had stated it without citing his proofs it would have been immeasurably more imposing, for it would have at least the presumptive authority of tradition. But he cites his proofs in full, and they turn out to be exclusively Scriptural proofs;<sup>7</sup> so that we have here to consider Jerome simply as an interpreter; his opinion has merely exegetical authority,—that is to say, no *independent* authority at all.<sup>8</sup> We can easily distinguish between the *fact* which he observes, (namely, the apparently indiscriminate use of the terms bishop and presbyter in the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles); and the *theory* he founds upon it,—to the effect that the Church was originally governed by a *college* of elders, until by a universal decree *one* of the number was elected and placed over the rest as a remedy for schism.<sup>9</sup>

says also: "It was St. Jerome who first questioned the divine right of that form of church government known as episcopacy."

<sup>6</sup> *Ad Ephes.* 6:11. "But," as Lightfoot remarks, "he is hardly consistent with himself. On *Tim.* 3:8 he recognizes the identity less distinctly; on *Phil.* 1:1 he ignores it; while on *Tit.* 1:7 he passes over the subject without a word."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. n. 16.

<sup>8</sup> For modern interpretations of these Scriptural passages, see p. 96 n.

<sup>9</sup> *Ad Tit.* 1. Idem est ergo presbyter et episcopus, et antequam diaboli instinctu studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis: 'Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollo, ego autem Cephae,' communi presbyterorum consilio ecclesiae gubernabantur. Postquam autem unus quisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat esse, non Christi, *in toto orbe decretum est*, ut unus de presbyteris electus superponeretur ceteris, ad quem omnis eccle-

How much truth there is in this theory it is not here in place to consider; it is sufficient to reveal the fact that we are not tied to its authority.

Novel as this theory undoubtedly was to Jerome's contemporaries, it had much to recommend it to their favor: far from being in conflict with the hierarchical views of the fifth century, it fell in aptly with a trend of the time, and furnished a happy justification of it. St. Jerome himself, as a presbyter, had evidently a personal satisfaction in his discovery: it bears, he thinks, against the arrogance of bishops *and* deacons. The position of the presbyters in relation to the bishop and deacons had for a long time been an anomalous one. From the beginning the title was one of great honor, but it was not till the early years of the second century that it indicated definite appointment and ordination to office (see § 23). Bishops and deacons, on the other hand, were primitive *officers*, and they had the whole executive administration of Church affairs in their hands. In Rome particularly, the power and importance of the presbyters had a rapid development. As early at least as the third century they had the management of the

siae cura pertineret, *ut schismatum semina tollerentur*. . . . Haec propterea, ut ostenderemus, apud veteres eosdem fuisse presbyteros quos episcopos, paulatim vero, ut dissensionum plantaria avelerentur, ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut ergo presbyteri sciunt, se ex *ecclesiae consuetudine* ei, qui sibi praepositus fuerit, esse subjectos, ita episcopi noverint, se magis consuetudine quam *dispositionis* *Domenicae veritate* presbyteris esse maiores, et in commune debere ecclesiam regere, imitantes Moysen, qui cum haberet in potestate solus praeesse populo Israel, septuaginta elegit, cum quibus populum iudicaret. He quotes in proof Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1;—and in his letter to Evangelus he quotes in addition Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 John 1; and 3 John 1. In the passage I have quoted above it may be seen how uncertain was St. Jerome's conception of the transaction which he postulates: the idea of a gradual development (*paulatim*) does not agree at all with the notion of a universal decree.

titular churches and the suburban cemeteries which were attached to them.<sup>10</sup> But it was particularly at Rome, too, that the deacons' importance was extraordinarily increased by reason of the tradition which artificially limited their number to seven. To this small number (later supplemented by seven subdeacons) was committed the great charge of administering the charities of the Church, and their close relations with the bishop gave them a preëminence which is strikingly exhibited in the fact that for a while the pope was ordinarily chosen from their ranks.

In this state of affairs it is not strange that there should be contention about the relative dignity of deacon and presbyter. Each side had some justification for its claim. The ancient custom of the Church did indeed allot to the presbyter a place of superior dignity at the Eucharist; but there must have been many other occasions for which no precedent prescribed.

The presbyter's superiority was settled by the Council of Nicaea. By that time the presbyterate had completed another stadium of its development, being organized as a collegial *presbytery* — a body which included, however, the deacons and even suffragan bishops. This, as the sole surviving surrogate for popular representation, constituted the official council of the bishop. The Roman college of cardinals is to-day the only survival of this early (third century) presbytery.

This development was already practically complete before St. Jerome's time, but a theoretical justification of it from Scripture was none the less welcome. St. Jerome's statement was in fact a justification of the existing order, and not an arraignment of it, — though

<sup>10</sup> See my *Monuments of the Early Church*, 1901, pp. 37 sq.

the ideal order which he discovered "among the ancients" allotted to the presbyter an even greater dignity than he actually enjoyed in Jerome's time. We can easily see, therefore, why it was so readily accepted. "Of his contemporaries and successors, Chrysostom, Pelagius, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, all acknowledge it. Thus in every one of the extant commentaries on the epistles containing the crucial passages, whether in Greek or Latin, before the close of the fifth century, this identity [of bishop and presbyter] is affirmed. In the succeeding ages bishops and popes accept the verdict of St. Jerome without question. Even late in the mediaeval period, and at the beginning of the reformation, the justice of his criticism or the sanction of his name carries the general suffrage of theologians."<sup>11</sup> That St. Jerome's dictum was not meant as a challenge of the divine right of episcopacy, is sufficiently proved by its universal reception.<sup>12</sup> If to the Protestant mind this seems impossible, it is only because our modern notions have created a breadth of distinction between ecclesiastical custom ("*consuetudine*") and direct institution by Christ ("*dispositionis Domini- cae veritate*") which was foreign to St. Jerome and his contemporaries. A distinction there undoubtedly was, and St. Jerome takes pains to express it in the strongest phrase possible; but it was not of a sort to invalidate the *jure divino* authority of the former.

That St. Jerome regarded the superiority of the bishop as authoritatively established, we see from his statement that "it was decreed throughout the whole world." Rothe supposes that this was done by a council of the Apostles (about A. D. 70). This is very likely St.

<sup>11</sup> Lightfoot, *Com. on Phil.* p. 99, — cf. n. 3 on same p. for references.

<sup>12</sup> It was inserted in the *Corpus Juris: Decr. pars I. dist. 95, c. 5.*



Jerome's meaning, for in referring to the "schisms" which led to the centralization of government in the hands of one person, he evidently has in mind the situation at Corinth as revealed by St. Paul's first Epistle, — particularly cap. 1:11-15. At the very least he must have fancied an early council of ecumenical authority, such as the Church of his own day had become accustomed to. St. Jerome sought to reduce to a minimum the difference between the power of the presbyter and that of the bishop, but in the matter of ordination he saw an irreducible minimum.

Consonant as St. Jerome's view is with the later Roman dogma which asserts the unity of the *sacerdotal* order (including both bishops and presbyters), there is no reason to suppose that it had any practical influence upon the development. This was determined by more potent factors, and again St. Jerome's view simply fell in with a trend of the time. In the second and third centuries the sacerdotal title was ascribed especially to the bishop, and this early parlance still commonly survived in Jerome's time. The priestly name and office came to be more and more exclusively associated with the sacrifice of the Eucharist, — at least from the time of Cyprian, who stated this doctrine in strong terms. The bishop originally owed his eminence in the Church, and later his sacerdotal title, to his authority over the Eucharist (see § 21). The same title, and something of the same dignity, accrued to the presbyters, when in the course of the third century, with the developed importance of the parochial organization (the titles), they attained an independent right to administer this sacrament. They, too, were priests; for the sacrifice *par excellence* was the offering of the body and blood of Christ, and priesthood was the power to offer this sacri-

fice.<sup>13</sup> Later than St. Jerome's day the bishop acquired a certain separateness of character through the notion which identified apostolic succession with tactual transmission in ordination. But this separateness was more than offset by the importance of the priesthood which bishop and presbyter shared in common. The medieval doctrine which made the *power* to perfect this sacrifice (effect transubstantiation) depend upon the 'character' acquired in ordination (*potestas ordinis*), compelled the recognition of a single order of the *sacerdotium*. This doctrine therefore is not a survival indicating an original identity of presbyter and bishop, but is an independent development along the line of Catholic principles.

We have already seen how much importance was attached to St. Jerome's view after the Reformation: his authority has continued down to our own day to dominate the study of the ministry. The exegetical point that Jerome raises is crucial for the understanding of early Church organization, and the chief service of Hatch's work was to break the force of this theory of the original identity of bishop and presbyter. Apart even from this point, it is worth while to devote so much space to St. Jerome's view, because it raises some of the most important questions which meet us in this study, being formulated at a time when primitive notions of the Church and the ministry were passing away, to give place to the medieval notions which are still dominant among Protestants as well as Catholics. It is significant that (except for the case of Alexandria—see note below) Jerome cites no tradition in proof of

<sup>13</sup> Ambrosiaster on 1 Tim. 3 : 8. Post episcopum tamen diaconi ordinatio subiicit. Quare? nisi quia episcopi et presbyteri una ordinatio est? Uterque enim sacerdos est, sed episcopus primus est; ut omnis episcopus presbyter sit, non omnis presbyter episcopus. This, like St. Jerome's view, is evidently a mere exegetical theory.



his theory: there was in fact no tradition in favor of it, and the theory has obscured for us the scanty traditions of authentic history which remain.

B. In the letter to Evangelus St. Jerome adduces the only traditional corroboration of his theory which he knows. Nam Alexandriae a Marco Evangelisto usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium episcopos presbyteri semper unum ex se electum in excelsiori gradu collocatum episcopum nominabant, quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat, aut diaconi eligant de se quem industrium noverint et archidiaconum vocent. Quid enim facit excepta ordinatione episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat? The inference from this would seem to be that the bishop is included in the presbytery. A little later he notices the fact that St. Paul, in his injunctions to Timothy and Titus about the ordination of bishops and deacons, omits the mention of the presbyter altogether; and the explanation is, "because in the bishop the presbyter, too, is included."

As throwing light upon St. Jerome's view, it is interesting to remark that he here supposes a single officer with the name and rank of a bishop to have existed in the Alexandrian Church from the time of the Evangelist Mark, and that until the middle of the third century the presbyters of that city enjoyed the peculiar privilege of "naming" one of their own number as bishop. St. Jerome knew Alexandria, and it may be presumed that he was familiar with its traditions. But from this brief mention no very clear deductions can be drawn, beyond the general purpose which Jerome has in mind, *i. e.* of proving that presbyters were originally hardly inferior to bishops. The language of St. Jerome is commonly understood to mean that the bishop was appointed as president of the presbytery without ordination, for his explicit reservation to the bishop of the power to ordain excludes the thought of ordination by the presbytery. Ignoring this discrepancy, Ritschl (*Entstehung*, p. 429) and Lightfoot (*Com. on Phil.* p. 231) understand him to mean that the Alexandrian presbyters *ordained* their bishop. Hatch, on the other hand, supposes that he had simply to be

enthroned (*Organization*, p. 134). Gore (*Ministry*, pp. 138 sq.) combats Jerome's evidence *in toto*, but in order "to face the possibility of its being true" (in Hatch's sense) he posits the theory that the Alexandrian presbyters were all "bishops *in posse*." Fortified by this hypothesis, Wordsworth (*Ministry*, pp. 135 sq.) eagerly accepts the notion that both at Rome and at Alexandria "the Presbyterate had something of the character of an episcopal college,"—cf. above, note A.

Great as are the diversities of opinion, it is possible to determine the actual state of the case at Alexandria with all reasonable assurance. St. Jerome's own view may be a matter of doubt, and at all events it is of no great importance; but it is decisive that both he and Ambrosiaster assert the *exclusive* right of bishops to ordain, expressly denying it to the presbyter as the *one* episcopal function which he may not share. It is true that we have sufficient historical evidence of ordination by presbyters: it was apparently the rule till late in the second century for city presbyters to ordain their own bishops. But this is just what it was impossible for Jerome to believe. His notion of legitimate ordination was ruled by the maxim which Ambrosiaster expresses, *nemo enim tribuit quod non accepit*. Therefore, what he learned about the peculiarity of the situation in Alexandria, he interpreted as a mere appointment of one of their number by a college of presbyter-bishops of the (assumed) Scriptural type. But is it possible for us to believe that? If the bishop of Alexandria (in the third century or even in the second) was established in his office without other ordination than that he had received as presbyter, it is the only case recorded in history,—as for Ambrosiaster's theory, see above, note 13.

I dissent from Hatch's opinion (*Organization*, p. 134) "that the rite (of imposition of hands) was not universal." Even if this were true, however, what follows is a *non sequitur*: "it is impossible that, if it was not universal, it could have been regarded as essential." To disprove the universality of ordination he gives two instances in addition to Jerome's story. I shall not stop to argue about "the fact that the passage in the Apostolical Constitutions which describes with elaborate minuteness

other ceremonies with which a bishop was appointed to office, says nothing of this ;” for the case is not strictly to the point. I lay no stress upon the tactual imposition of hands : the prayer was the essential element of the rite ; the *gesture* was its ordinary, and — as we have good reason to believe — its invariable accompaniment. In this case, however, a comparison with the sources of *Apost. Const.* VIII. 4 (*i. e.* the so-called *Egyptian Church Ordinances*, c. 31, and the *Canons of Hippolytus*, c. ii. 7) makes it seem exceedingly unlikely that the interpolator intended to suppress the rite of imposition of hands in favor of his liturgical fancy of having the deacons hold the Gospel over the ordinand’s head during the prayer of consecration. The other argument which Hatch adduces is more specious, but demonstrably more fallacious : “Nor is the rite mentioned in the enumeration which St. Cyprian gives (*Epist.* 55 [52]) of the elements which had combined to make the election of Cornelius valid : it was of importance to show that no essential particular had been omitted, but he enumerates only the votes of the people, the testimony of the clergy, the consent of the bishops.” For Cyprian, the point at issue was the *legality* of the election of Cornelius as against Novatian ; not the sacramental validity, — which both opponents might claim, though according to Cyprian’s doctrine of the dependence of sacraments upon the worthiness of the minister, even this might be denied Novatian. It is not strange therefore that the most distinctively religious element in ordination should be passed over : the fact rather suggests that the right of imposition of hands was so universally recognized as indispensable that it did not need to be mentioned. Hatch’s citation of this instance is, in fact, peculiarly unfortunate, for it involves a reference to the story of Novatian’s ordination (*Euseb. H. E.* 6, 43), *which is the strongest evidence we have* of the opinion which was current in the middle of the third century, and especially at Rome, as to the indispensable necessity of ordination by imposition of hands, — and, indeed, *by three bishops*.

Hatch has no further proofs to offer. But — strangely enough — Bishop Wordsworth (p. 128 sq.) comes to his assistance with an elaborate argument which at first sight seems

imposing. As a matter of fact there is not one sound presumption in it. What speciousness it has, depends entirely upon the theory of the original identity of presbyters and bishops; a question which must be investigated further on (see § 21, pp. 244 sq.). The Canons of Hippolytus, whatever be their age or origin, do *not* "suggest a stage of development in which the two titles were being gradually distinguished": they suggest the contrary. In particular the injunction in c. iv. 30, 31, to the effect that in the ordination of a presbyter the same prayer shall be used as over a bishop, "with merely the exception of the name of the episcopate," does not raise a presumption that no new ordination was required when a *presbyter* was made bishop. The peculiar importance of ordination to the episcopate is assumed in c. vi. 43, 44, where it is ordered that a martyr shall be admitted as a presbyter without ordination, but if he would be bishop he must be ordained. Meretur gradum presbyterialem coram Deo, non secundum ordinationem, quae fit ab episcopo. Immo, confessio est ordinatio ejus. Quodsi vero episcopus fit, ordinetur. Achelis, *Texte u. Untersuch.* VI. 4, p. 67. The question of the right of presbyters to ordain, and that of the possible elevation to the episcopate without ordination, are separate and must be carefully distinguished. The injunction of *Canon. Hippol.* ii. 10 (that "one from among the bishops and presbyters be chosen to lay hands on his [the elected bishop's] head and pray") does not go any way towards proving the *latter* assumption. The purely exegetical theory of Ambrosiaster cannot rightly be brought into any relation with the fact that in the *Canon. Hippol.* the same prayer was used in the ordination of bishops and presbyters. These, however, together with St. Jerome's view, are the proofs upon which Wordsworth relies to establish the astonishing thesis that in the third century Rome and Alexandria — precisely the two most authoritative Churches in Christendom — were so far behind the rest of the world that they recognized no essential difference between presbyters and bishops!

That the situation at Alexandria in the middle of the third century was peculiar, we have good ground for supposing. We may presume that the peculiarity was an archaic survival, and



that it consisted essentially in the fact that the Alexandrian presbyters maintained a higher importance relative to the bishop than was elsewhere the case. All the other evidence which we have on this subject unites in pointing out the precise mode in which the peculiar privilege of the Alexandrian presbyters was exhibited. Ambrosiaster (*ad Ephes.* 4:12) says: Denique in Egyptum presbyteri consignant, si presens non sit episcopus,—“in Egypt the presbyters ordain, if the bishop be not present.” Probably the ordination of presbyters and deacons is here meant. *Consignant* is probably a corruption, for in the middle of the fourth century no writer, even in the West, would speak of the custom of Alexandria as unique allowing a presbyter to *confirm* in the absence of the bishop; and St. Jerome affirms generally—not merely with reference to Alexandria—that *ordination* is the only *exclusive* prerogative of the bishop. At all events in the parallel passage by the anonymous author (perhaps the same as the so-called Ambrosiaster) of *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, falsely attributed to Augustine, the corruption has crept in (*Quaest.* 101, referring as usual to 1 Timothy): Quid est enim episcopus nisi primus presbyter, hoc est sumus sacerdos? Denique non aliter quam compresbyteros hic vocat et consacerdotes suos. . . . Nam in Alexandria et per totam Aegyptam, si desit episcopus, consecrat (*v. l.* consignat) presbyter. One may raise the question whether this situation endured up to the time of this writer (which is improbable), and whether even in the third century it was the same “throughout all Egypt;” but for Alexandria itself it is substantiated by Eutychius (*Annales* I. p. 331, ed. Pococke, Oxon. 1656), who though a late writer (tenth century) was himself Patriarch of Alexandria, and who writes independently of Jerome, contradicting him in some details, and adding others which help to explain the situation. Constituit evangelista Marcus una cum Hakania patriarcha duodecim presbyteros, qui nempe cum patriarcha manerent, adeo ut cum vacaret patriarchatus unum e duodecim presbyteris eligerent, cuius capiti relinqui undecim manus imponentes ipsi benedicerent et patriarcham crearent, deinde virum aliquem insignem eligerent, quem secum presbyterum constituerunt loco

eius, qui factus est patriarcha, ut ita semper existarent duodecim. Neque desiit Alexandria institutum hoc de presbyteris, ut scilicet patriarchas crearent ex presbyteris duodecim, usque ad tempora Alexandri patriarchae Alexandriae. The substance of this is, that the number of presbyters at Alexandria was limited to *twelve*, and that down to the time of the council of Nicaea (of which Alexander was a member) these twelve enjoyed the right of electing one of their own number and consecrating him bishop by imposition of hands.

In itself it is not unlikely that in Alexandria the number of presbyters was restricted to twelve, on symbolical grounds, just as at Rome the deacons were limited to seven. The presbyters were the successors of the twelve Apostles, as the bishop was the representative of Christ. In source A of the *Apostolic Church Order*, — a document which is plausibly ascribed to Egypt, and is confidently to be dated with Harnack about the middle of the second century (*Texte u. Untersuch.* II. 5, p. 55), we find the number of presbyters prescribed by the symbolical consideration that in the Apocalypse (4:4; 5:8) there were four and twenty elders about the throne of the Lord. This view of the relation of bishop and presbyters respectively to the Lord and to the twelve Apostles was not peculiar to Alexandria; nor did it represent, as Ritschl claims, an idea of the episcopate which proceeded from Jerusalem, more primitive than the Catholic theory which supplanted it. On the contrary, it was, as is well known, the view of Ignatius: it was the universal Catholic view, till the idea of apostolic succession assumed a new form in the third century. If it is a fact that the number of Alexandrian presbyters continued till a comparatively late period to be thus limited in number, we can easily understand why they retained a peculiar dignity and power, — just as the seven deacons did at Rome.

Except that this statement of Eutychius explains an unusual situation at Alexandria for which we have other evidence, we should have small reason to trust it. What can be said in the way of harmonizing his discrepancy with St. Jerome in regard to the date when this regime terminated, has been very well said by Ritschl, *op. cit.* pp. 429 sq. We have no reason to



trust the statement that the presbyters *elected* as well as consecrated their bishop; for we know that the popular rights of election were long preserved in Alexandria. This is a natural anachronism, like the use of the title "Patriarch." Or else the word denotes merely the right of *nomination*, which might count upon the assent of the people. The reason which Eutychius gives for the exercise of what he considers so abnormal a right on the part of the presbyters, we also know to be a mistake. For—not to speak of the fact that there is record of bishops in Egypt before Alexander—Source A of the *Apostolic Church Order* above mentioned reveals the fact that bishops must have been peculiarly numerous there in the second century. It is prescribed that "If there are few persons, and in any place there are not found twelve men capable of voting for a bishop, they shall write to neighboring Churches, where the congregations are firmly established, that three chosen men may come from thence and carefully examine who is worthy." Here election is the important matter,—or rather the *selection* of the most worthy man. Ordination must be assumed, and it must have been administered by the congregation and the three deputies: it is possible that the rite of imposition of hands was performed by a layman, it is certain that it was not necessarily done by a bishop. The only alternative is that there was no ordination. In the established congregation (comprising at least twelve men) the case is plainer: here no delegates from the neighboring Churches are present, and consequently no bishop. That the Church in Alexandria was an "established" congregation it need not be said. It was *the* established congregation in Egypt, and consequently there could be no question of inviting neighboring Churches or their representatives to assist the "twelve presbyters" and the thousands of the faithful in Alexandria in examining, electing, and ordaining their bishop. The situation as here depicted is exceedingly significant, because it was not a local Egyptian peculiarity, but represents, as we have reason to believe, the normal and universal custom of the Catholic Church throughout the first half of the second century.

There were special reasons, as we have seen, why the custom

endured longer in Alexandria than elsewhere; but there still remains to consider another element of the situation which was by no means peculiar to Alexandria, and which endured as long as the supposedly strange practice we have just been considering: that is the recognized superiority of the city presbyter to the country bishop. The last reference we have to the right of presbyters to ordain is the canon XIII. of the council of Ancyra (A. D. 314), and it is there mentioned only to restrict it. It is ordained that "it be not allowed to country-bishops (*χωρεπισκόποις*) to ordain presbyters or deacons, nor even to city-presbyters, except permission be given in each parish by the bishop in writing." This is Lightfoot's rendering (*Phil.* p. 232) of the text which is commonly received, — which Wordsworth also justifies (*op. cit.* p. 140, note) *contra* Gore (*op. cit.* p. 370, note D). Here the city presbyter is recognized as the superior of the country bishop, though "*not even*" he is to be allowed to ordain presbyters and deacons without written permission from his bishop. We can imagine how the important city presbyters of Alexandria about this time must have rebelled against their patriarch Alexander's innovation of introducing one whom they must consider no more than a country bishop as their superior in the matter of ordination. In the age which is represented by the Apostolic Church Order, with its numerous cures of less than twelve men presided over by a bishop, how impossible must have been the thought of subordinating the Alexandrian presbytery to a *χωρεπίσκοπος*! Lightfoot says (*ibid.* p. 232, note): "The name and office of the *χωρεπίσκοπος* appear to be reliques of the time when *ἐπίσκοπος* and *πρεσβύτερος* were synonyms. While the large cities had their college of presbyters, for the villages a single *πρεσβύτερος* (or *ἐπίσκοπος*) would suffice." But from the *Apost. Ch. Ord.* we see what the *χωρεπίσκοπος* really was: he was a Catholic bishop in the strict sense, having under him (in the small communities referred to) *at least* two presbyters and three deacons. Small as his cure was, he had the absolute independence of the Catholic bishop, and he lost it only as he became absorbed in the metropolitan presbytery, — the situation implied in the canon XIII. of Ancyra.

It is to be remarked that this canon is the earliest evidence we have considered for presbyterial ordination of *presbyters* and *deacons*. This probably was a less common case than the ordination of bishops. For it lies in the nature of the case that the bishop was ordinarily the person to ordain his own staff,—with or without the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, as might be the custom.

#### § 4, REFORMATION PRINCIPLES

I do not purpose to give a history of the various forms of Church government which followed the Reformation. This would be out of all place and proportion in an introduction. But a brief, synoptical statement of the principles which determined this development in its divergent lines will enable us to understand the point of subsequent controversy, and may prepare the mind for investigating without prejudice the primitive institutions of Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Some of these principles may be traced back to conceptions which were common to all Protestant theologians; but the divergence, too, was already definitely marked in the first age of the Reformation, and the subsequent development was conditioned by it.<sup>2</sup>

The chief point of divergence can be the more definitely stated because it was determined by the opinions

<sup>1</sup> The references cited under this section are to be regarded rather as illustration than as proof. It must be manifest that statements of so general a character as these that are here made do not readily admit of detailed proof,—nor do they need it. As specially worthy to be consulted in this connection, I mention: Kliefoth, *Acht Bücher von der Kirche*, Bd. I. 1854; Köstlin, *Luthers Lehre von der Kirche*, 1868; Krauss, *Das protestantische Dogma von der unsichtbaren Kirche*, 1876; Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*, Bd. I. 1892; Seeberg, *Der Begriff der Christ. Kirche*, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> As has been said above, the *forms* of Church government which actually characterized the various Protestant communions were not logically (essentially) related to these principles, but only historically (accidentally) conditioned by them.

of two men. Luther and Calvin are representative of two sharply contrasted temperaments ; and not only did they stamp the express image of their spirit upon the creeds of the two great Protestant systems, but their own writings have continued to enjoy almost confessional authority. It is futile to try to minimize these differences. That sentence of Luther's at Marburg is almost as true with reference to Church government as it is with reference to worship: *Ihr habt einen andern Geist als wir*.<sup>3</sup>

The first and the principal protest of the Reformation was against the Catholic idea of the Church. This is a protest which is no less essential now than it was then to the integrity of the Protestant position, though its necessity was then so acutely felt as to be recognized by all. A pious mind could not but be vexed by the incongruity between a corrupt Church and that congregation of saints to which the Apostle applies the sublime predicates, the household of God, the body, the bride of Christ. St. Augustine reckoned with this incongruity, which was the chief ground of the Donatist schism ; but the solution that he offered (*de Doctr.*

<sup>3</sup> It need hardly be said that the position of the English Church cannot be classified so easily. It was strongly influenced by both the Lutheran and the Reformed theology, while the retention of the Catholic organization rendered it receptive of other elements of Catholic tradition. So far as its position is authoritatively defined, the definition of the sacraments is Reformed, the definition of the Church is Lutheran, — or more strictly it is Melancthon's definition. The Book of Common Prayer was more directly influenced by Reformed agendas than by Lutheran ; but the liberal Christian spirit which animated the whole reform of worship was Luther's spirit, — as much opposed to the spirit of Calvin as to the spirit of Rome, and altogether out of keeping with the disastrous civil policy of enforcing uniformity. The doctrine of apostolic succession which has subsequently been commonly entertained in the Anglican communion necessitates a definition of the Church opposed to that of the Articles.



3 : 32) in his distinction between the *corpus Domini verum* and *permixtum* or *simulatum*, *i. e.* between the true and the mixed Church, was far from perfect.

The same incongruity is to be felt, indeed, though in a less degree, when we look back upon New Testament times : St. Paul attributed the name of saints collectively to Christian societies which certainly did not even then consist exclusively of holy persons. How much more when the Church was desperately corrupt in its head and principal members ; when the official power which it claimed to exercise in the name of God was used to oppose the truth ! The reformers who faced the alternative of denying the truth or suffering separation from the Church, were obliged to assert — and the assertion was made with full force of faith, and not as a shift and apology for their position — that the Roman Church, the legally organized Church, was not the exclusive institute of salvation, was not to be identified with the people of God, the body of Christ. This assertion all Protestants united in making.

The actual retention of the legal (Catholic) organization by the English Protestants did not affect their doctrinal position. Men had been so long accustomed to regard communion with the Papacy as the ultimate legitimation of Church standing, that they could not easily be satisfied with a half-way view ; that is, with the early Catholic theory of independent episcopacy. The English movement, even more than the German, reflects the new spirit of nationality : it was as a national church, not as an episcopal church, that it legitimated its reform.

The distinction which all united in making, more or less expressly, was that between the *visible* and the *invisible* Church. It was obviously a rough and ready way of solving the problem which pressed upon all.



How inadequate and even misleading the solution was, men did not then realize. We have to remark that it is a distinction which was not made by St. Paul, nor by any other New Testament writer. It is therefore liable to abuse, for it leads one to deny to the visible Church those high attributes which St. Paul applied to the only Church he had ever in mind. And however great may be its theoretical advantages, its practical dangers are greater ; because it depotentiates the only notion of the Church which can be an effective inspiration to service, in fact does away with the Church as the social sphere of Christian life.

Wyclif, and after him Hus, defined the true Church as *universitas predestinatorum* — the whole body of those who are predestinated. It is evident that we have here, not only Augustine's doctrine of salvation, but *one side* of his doctrine of the Church — his distinction between the *corpus verum* and *permixtum*. One-sided indeed the doctrine is with Wyclif and Hus ; for this Church has no actual existence as a social bond ; it is no community of saints in which each member serves the other and edifies the whole ; it is a mere numerical abstraction, representing all predestinated persons, who are scattered here and there throughout the world, indistinguishable from nominal Christians.

In his first public disputation (at Leipsic in 1519) Luther defended this definition of Hus. This is significant of the fact that his idea of the invisible Church was, like Calvin's, intimately related to his doctrine of justification : the Church is the whole number of those who are holy by reason of their faith. He clung to the clause in the creed, "the communion of saints," as the authoritative definition of the Church. Holiness was for

Luther the principal note of the Church ; but it is not a visible note — this holiness which is by faith. The Church is the object of faith, not of sight ; and in that sense it is invisible.

And yet this Church is no mere ideal. Luther manifests here his strong, practical grasp of evangelical principle. He himself did not contrast the Church visible and the Church invisible, as was done by Chemnitz and the later Lutheran theologians. According to Luther, the Church which is visible primarily to faith, may be also visible outwardly : (1) in the ministry of the word and in the sacraments, and (2) in a life conformable to God's law. Luther constantly thinks and speaks of the Church as the visible manifestation of God's kingdom.<sup>4</sup> This Church, being "God's own house," can be constituted and ruled no otherwise than by God's own law, that is by his word.

It is well known that Luther made the reality of the sacraments wholly dependent upon God's word. No otherwise was it with the Church : where God's word is — that is, where the Gospel is truly preached, truly confessed, and truly followed — there is the holy catholic Church, even though the members be few.<sup>5</sup> This is

<sup>4</sup> *Sermon on 20th S. aft. Trin.* (1533), Erlangen ed. Bd. 6, p. 132 : Hie soll man erstlich lernen, was das Wort Himmelreich heisse, nämlich das es nicht heisse ein Königreich auf Erden, sondern ein Reich im Himmel, da Gott selber allein König inne ist. Das heissen wir die christlichen Kirchen, die hier auf Erden ist. . . . Auf gut deutsch heisset das Himmelreich ebenso viel als das Reich Christi, das Reich des Evangelii und des Glaubens. Denn wo das Evangelium ist, da ist Christus. Wo Christus ist, da ist der heilige Geist und sein Reich, das rechte Himmelreich. *Von Conciliis und Kirchen*, Erl. ed. Bd. 25, p. 447 : Auf Erden allein zwei leiblich Regiment sind, Stadt und Haus. . . . Darnach kömpt das Dritte, Gottes eigen Haus und Stadt, das ist die Kirche.

<sup>5</sup> *Von Conciliis und Kirchen*, Erl. ed. Bd. 25, p. 419 : Wo du nu solch Wort hörest oder siehest predigen, glauben, bekennen und darnach thun,

Luther's rendering of the early maxim, "where the Spirit of Christ is, there is the Church." For by God's word he means, not the mere letter of the Bible, but the truth, the Gospel, — particularly the Gospel as it is *preached*. He recurs repeatedly to the Lord's promise, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" and he interprets this to mean nothing less than was expressed by the early maxim — which had already lost the sincerity of its meaning in Tertullian's time — *ubi tres, ibi ecclesia*. From this truly evangelical principle Luther developed his whole idea of the Church, which he maintained throughout his life, suffering no dread of practical consequences to mar the consistency of his teaching on this point. It is surprising to note how faithfully he reflects the primitive notion, when he sees in a Christian community so constituted — however small it be — not *a* church, nor a branch of the Church, but *the* Church. It is upon the power granted to the "two or three" that he founds the rights of the national Church, or of any other larger body whatsoever.<sup>6</sup>

da habe keinen Zweifel, dass gewisslich daselbs sein muss eine rechte Ecclesia sancta catholica, ein christlich heilig Volk, wenn ihr gleich sehr wenig sind.

<sup>6</sup> *Von der Winkelmesse*, Erl. ed. Bd. 31, p. 374: Wo das Evangelium recht und rein gepredigt wird, da muss eine heilige christliche Kirche sein. . . . Wo aber eine heilige christliche Kirche ist, da müssen alle Sakrament sein, Christus selbs und sein Heiliger Geist. Sollten wir nu eine heilige christliche Kirche sein und die grösten und nötigsten Stück haben, als Gottes Wort, Christum, Geist, Glauben, Gebet, Taufe, Sacrament, Schlüssel, Ampt, und sollten nicht auch das geringste Stück haben, nämlich die Macht und Recht, Etliche zum Ampt zu berufen, die uns das Wort, Taufe, Sacrament, Vergebung (so bereit da sind) darreichen und drinnen dienen: was wäre mir das für eine Kirche? Wo bleibe hie Christus Wort, da er spricht: Wo zween oder drei in meinem Namen versammelt sind, da bin ich unter ihnen? Und abermal: Wo zween unter euch eins werden auf Erden, warumb es ist, das sie bitten wollen, das soll ihn widerfahren von meinem Vater in Himmel. Haben zween oder drei solche Gewalt, wie viel mehr eine ganze Kirche?

It can readily be seen how thoroughly this excludes the idea that a priesthood, clerus, or any authorized order or organization is indispensable for the constitution of the Church. The whole power of ecclesiastical rule (Kirchenregiment<sup>7</sup>) lies in the word of God, and this power is given to *all*. This is the sceptre of God's kingdom; upon it is founded the power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose, which Christ gave not to the Apostles in especial, but to the Church as a whole, — or rather to every disciple as a personal gift, in proportion as each possesses the word.

But what of ecclesiastical officers? How can there be officers in such a Church? Officers there are, *and there must be*, for the whole multitude cannot preach, absolve, and administer the sacraments, and therefore they must commit this function (or suffer it to be committed) to *one*. Luther insisted strongly upon the necessity of establishing ministers of the word throughout the land; — it made no difference what they might be called, whether bishops, pastors, or preachers. But he argued the necessity solely upon *practical* grounds; and to the end of his life he never wavered in this opinion, great as was the temptation to strengthen the authority of the pastors by referring their office to divine institution.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Augs. Conf.* Cap. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Von Conciliis und Kirchen*, Erl. ed. Bd. 25, p. 423: Zum Fünften kennen man die Kirche äusserlich dabei, dass sie Kirchendiener weihet oder beruft oder Aempter hat, die sie bestellen soll. Denn man muss Bischöfe, Pharrherr oder Prediger haben, die öffentlich und sonderlich die obgenannten vier Stück oder Heilighum [Gottes Wort, Sakrament der Taufe, Sakrament des Altars, Schlüsselgewalt] geben, reichen und uben, von wegen und in Namen der Kirchen, vielmehr aber aus Einsetzung Christi, wie St. Paulus Eph. 4 sagt: Accepit dona in hominibus, er hat gegeben etlich zu Aposteln, Propheten, Evangelisten, Lehrer, Regierer u. s. w. Denn der Haufe ganz kann solchs nicht thun, sondern müßens Einem befelhen oder lassen befolhen sein. Was wollt sonst



The power of ecclesiastical rule must, out of practical consideration for good order, be exercised by one; but this did not make void the power of each member of the Church, for their power was not a personal power, but the power inherent in God's word which they possessed. Therefore the power of the officer—the minister of the word—was not rendered less absolute because it was not an exclusive power, nor less divine because the office was justified by expediency: it was the *whole* power of Church rule, the *whole* power of God's word, to which obedience was due as to the truth. Therefore, too, the office was not a representative one, and it was a matter of comparative indifference in what way or by whom the officer was appointed, if only in such a way as would insure popular assent.<sup>9</sup> His power did not represent the power of the individuals who made up the Church: it was the power of God, and he was the representative of Christ. According to Luther's idea, Church government (Kirchenregiment) properly so called consisted solely in the preaching of the word, administering the sacraments, and exercising the power of the keys (the power to bind and to loose), which included the ban, or excommunication. The *office* was of human institution, but the *power* was of divine institution, the gift of Christ to his Church.

werden, wenn ein jglicher reden oder reichen wollt, und keiner dem andern weichen? Es muss Einem allein befohlen werden, und allein lassen predigen, täufen, absolvieren und Sakrament reichen, die andern alle des zufrieden sein und drein willigen. Wo du nu solchs siehest, da sei gewiss, dass da Gottes Volk und das christlich heilig Volk sei.

<sup>9</sup> The English formularies were so drawn as at least not to exclude this view—Art. xxiii. It may be observed in this connection that the retention in the English Ordinal of the medieval sentence of ordination, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," is to be explained by the Lutheran doctrine.



This view of the Church and of Church government is entirely consistent in itself, and it seems to exclude the notion that any human authority can be exercised over God's kingdom, or any legal constitution be imposed upon it. So Sohm argues. But I cannot altogether agree with him here. His view has been strongly contested in Germany, where Luther's personal doctrine is still a matter of great practical moment.

It is certainly true that Luther held other views about the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, which seem to us frankly inconsistent with the above, though to him they probably seemed to refer to a totally different sphere. Luther and the Lutheran confessions limit strictly the idea of Church government to the purely spiritual rule which has just been described; but they both recognize another rule, which was expressly of a worldly character, designed to maintain external order and regulate the conduct of worship and discipline. Here we have the idea of a government which we cannot but think of as ecclesiastical, though Luther doubtless thought of it as exercised not so much *in* the Church as *over* it. The power over this broad province of ecclesiastical regiment fell naturally, and in a certain sense by right, to the civil ruler (Landesherr). It was he that appointed the ministers of the word, prescribed the ritual, administered the economical affairs of the Church, regulated the important question of marriage, and decided all questions of outward discipline. According to Luther's theory, the civil magistrate exercised his power, in part as "the chief member of the Church," and in part as the one to whom God had given the worldly sword — in distinction from the spiritual. It seems to be true, though it involves a strange contradiction, that Luther's thoroughly spiritual and evangelical idea of the Church,

and his consequent indifference to the question what power should rule the external order, was in part the justification, and certainly the occasion, in the circumstances of that time, of the development which has since completely subjected the Lutheran Church to the bureaucratic control of the state.

In order to understand the close relation between Church and State which actually subsisted not only in the Lutheran, but in the Reformed and Anglican communions, we must remember that medieval Christianity had succeeded in its effort to ecclesiasticize the world, only to find that this was equivalent to secularizing the Church. When we consider how the government of strictly secular affairs was shared between the civil magistrate and the ecclesiastical prelate; when we reflect that the secular authority of the pope, and even of the bishops, was the most conspicuous aspect of their office, we can see how natural it was for the Landesherr in Germany to assume the authority of the episcopate, for the King of England to retain the authority which he had wrested from the pope, and — the most extreme case of all — for Zwingli to turn over the whole spiritual government of the congregation to the civil magistrates of Zurich.<sup>10</sup> It seemed a matter

<sup>10</sup> Owing to the inability of the secular government to manage directly ecclesiastical affairs, the general government of the Lutheran Churches was committed to superintendents and consistories, appointed and controlled by the state. Several theories have been in vogue from time to time to justify the *status quo* (the exercise of ecclesiastical power by the state), and each of them has been influential in modifying the actual constitution of the government. The earliest was the so-called *Episcopalsystem*, which ascribed to the prince the *potestas jurisdictionis* of the bishop, — and even the *potestas ordinis*! The same theory was applied by the English to the ecclesiastical power of the king. Upon this, and upon the two later theories which successively predominated — the *Territorialsystem* and the *Kollegialsystem* — see Herzog's *Realencyklopädie s. vv.* The practical effect of this German system, for which Luther was

of comparative indifference who regulated the outward affairs of the Church, — whether bishop or prince. From the practical point of view the state found itself unprepared to deal with the new questions which were forced upon it; the old order being done away, no new machinery had been devised to take its place; the civil courts, for instance, were embarrassed by the necessity of adjudicating questions of marriage, which hitherto had belonged to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

It was in view of all this, as well as for the sake of peace and outward unity, that Luther was ready to submit to the whole papal and episcopal regime, if only it were not enjoined as a matter of faith, and were not used to subvert the Gospel. Luther's attitude in this matter is to be explained by the fact that he, in common with many of his time, regarded the rule of the pope (and the bishops) rather as a secular rule over the Church than as a spiritual rule in it. Hence it was a choice merely between the pope and the Landesherr or any other civil authority. He denied the divine right of the pope, on the ground that he held no office in the Church — that is, that he did not exercise the ministry of the word in any congregation. It is well known that at a later time Melancthon cherished the hope of restoring the episcopal rule as the only means of establishing the outward order of the Church.

The doctrine of the invisible Church, which, as we have seen, Luther held in a very characteristic form, at least indirectly responsible, has been to represent the Church as an institute for dispensing grace by word and sacrament to a merely passive and receptive people. The same is of course true of the English Church, except as it has been vivified by the Reformed ideas of popular representation in government, and by the Puritan sense of personal responsibility.

was given a new meaning by the Reformed theologians, who for the first time distinguished the invisible from the visible Church.

The Reformed theology is nowhere so much beholden to Zwingli as in the doctrine of the Church — particularly as regards the definition of the visible Church. The principles which underlie all of the most striking peculiarities of Calvin's system of Church government were already defined by Zwingli. In his doctrine of the invisible Church he stood in a measure apart, for though he defined it, like Luther and the other reformers, as the whole company of the elect, he abstracted the notion from any reference to the sacraments, and made even the word of revelation in so far unessential that he could think of the invisible Church as including even pious pagans. This abstract doctrine has been without effect upon Reformed theology, for Calvin brought it again into line with the general trend of Protestant thought, making the invisible Church to depend as strictly as did Luther upon the word, and in some measure upon the sacraments.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This distinctive tenet of the Calvinistic theology is expressed more or less sharply in all the Reformed confessions. In the *Westminster Confession* the visible and the invisible Church are simply placed side by side: c. xxv. 1, "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." 2, "The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." This abstract conception of the Church, which stands in marked contrast to Luther's, was essentially conditioned by a very different estimate of the objective worth of the sacraments as means of grace. Luther's sacramental doctrine was a very practical counterpoise to the philosophy of predestination. This difference explains to a large extent the different



But even the visible Church was, for Zwingli, a notion hardly less abstract than the invisible. It denotes the whole number of those that outwardly profess the true faith. The emphasis upon the orthodoxy of the faith excluded the Anabaptists and the Romanists. But this universal Church visible had only a theoretical in-

religious history of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. The Reformed theology did not suffer its theory of the sacraments to check the rigid consequences of the doctrine of particular election. From this point of view it is plain that the Church could not come to be regarded as an institute of salvation, as Lutherans and Anglicans naturally think of it. The latter attitude towards the Church has conducted to quietism, pietism, and also indifferentism : the former encouraged a keen sense of personal responsibility before God, and also a strenuous zeal for purifying the Church, which has often showed itself in unlovely ways. The instigation to Puritan zeal lies again in the doctrine of the Church : it is the effort to make the visible Church as nearly as possible coterminous with the invisible. This doctrine also explains the tendency to multiply sects, and it must be reckoned with in all attempts to restore Church unity. According to this view, which is still potent, the only unity which is important is in the nature of the case assured, for it is the unity of the *invisible* Church, which alone is the body and spouse of Christ. But even in relation to the visible Church the idea of unity or disunity cannot arise, for it "consists of all those throughout the world that *profess* the true religion," and as such it cannot (on principle) be organized—it also cannot be disorganized. The question is only as to its greater or less *purity*. According to this theory, the only unity that can be practically considered is unity within the "particular church," the local congregation. The theory is essentially, as it was originally, a theory of congregational independency, and it gives no support to the broader Presbyterian organization in presbyteries, synods, and an assembly or council. What is meant by the statement of the Westminster Conf., that out of the visible Church "there is no ordinary possibility of salvation"? It means that one must ordinarily belong to a "particular church." But in reality it stands here as an unrelated statement, a pious repetition of a primitive maxim, and the Reformed Churches have no coherent philosophy to justify it. It may be remarked here that the preceding statement of the same article, to the effect that the visible Church "is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ," does not represent the prevalent Reformed view. The distinction—or rather the contrast—which is now commonly drawn between the Church and the kingdom of God, is of Reformed origin, and is even now supported chiefly by Reformed scholars.



terest : it was not organized, it was incapable of organization, because it was impossible to collect in one place the vast multitude of professed believers which was scattered throughout the world. To all practical intents this visible Church was the same as if it were invisible. But it became visible in the "particular churches" (the local, parish congregations — Kilchhören, as Zwingli called them). In the particular church, at last, we have something which is no mere ideal; for its members do actually meet together, and that not as a mere numerical aggregate, but as an *organization*. It is the secular manifestation of the ideal universal Church, and like every other secular society it must have a definite organization. But only the *local* society can meet, and hence this alone can be organized. There can be no broader organization than this, because, according to Zwingli, there can be no such thing as *representation* in the Church : the local congregation is the *only* form in which the Church comes to concrete existence, the *only* form in which its divine powers are brought into effective exercise. The particular church therefore possesses the *whole* power of the Church of Christ, — not, however, as though it were the body of Christ (according to the primitive view — see pp. 95 sqq.), but as a "member" of that body, as a "member" of the whole Church.<sup>12</sup> As

<sup>12</sup> The "particular church," defined as "a member" of the whole, has remained one of the distinctive phrases of all the Reformed denominations — including the English Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The essence of congregational independency lies in this notion of Zwingli's, and the broader organization — presbyteries, synods, and council — which the Presbyterians have erected into an article of faith, is radically inconsistent with it. It is evident, however, that the description of the particular church as a member of the catholic Church which is Christ's body (cf. *Westminster Conf.* cxxv. art. 3) is opposed to the usage of Scripture, according to which only the individual Christian is spoken of as a *member* of Christ. It is of the essence of the Biblical conception

the universal Church of true believers (that is, the invisible Church, the bride of Christ) can never meet on earth, and yet its authority must be exercised for the right dispensation of the truth, the particular church must of necessity exercise the whole power of the bride of Christ,—the power of decreeing ordinances, the cure of souls, the expulsion of sinners, the readmission of penitents.

And yet, so strong was Zwingli's emphasis upon the particularity, the local character of the congregation, that he did not advance from these premises to the primitive idea that the individual church, acting as the bride of Christ, exercises an ecumenical authority: for him it has only *local* authority, because after all it is only a "particular church," only a "member" of the whole. Yet it exercises the authority of Christ, which cannot be a local authority. What a contradiction this involves!

The exercise of ecclesiastical authority, as is apparent from the whole of this reasoning, belongs not to the minister of the word (as in the Lutheran view), nor to the officer as such (the Catholic view), nor indeed to the individual at all (as in the primitive view it must), *but to the congregation*. Here we have for the first time an expression of the *congregational principle* which has dominated the whole history of the Reformed Churches. It is in his estimate of the place and importance of the individual disciple that Zwingli most plainly contradicts the Scriptural view. In the primitive view it is the individual only that can be the organ of ecclesiastical authority, and that by reason of the charismatic endow-

that the relationship is personal; only a person can be a member of Christ's body, and the place cannot be taken by an organization, as a juristic person.

ment which he has from Christ the head of the Church. The organization can possess no charisma. With Zwingli, on the contrary, the individual disciple, though he is the unit of the invisible Church, is not the unit of the visible: the only unit, "member," and organ of the visible Church is the congregation. It is the congregation *as such* — the congregation *as it is met together*, for Zwingli rightly refuses to recognize any delegated or representative authority in the Church. And yet it is not *any* gathering of disciples in Christ's name that constitutes a congregation (Kilchhöre) and can exercise ecclesiastical authority. In this Zwingli flatly opposes himself to the Scripture, and he is obliged to explain away Christ's promise in Matt. 18: 20, making it refer to the *invisible* Church, not to the visible, to which alone ecclesiastical power belongs.<sup>13</sup> Two or three who are met together in Christ's name do not constitute a church, though Christ be in the midst of them. Though a great multitude were met together — even the whole multitude of believers — they would have no ecclesiastical authority, for they would not be a particular church. It is clear that the notes which authenticate any particular assembly of Christians as an organ of ecclesiastical authority are external notes. Before it need be asked whether Christ is in their midst, it must be determined whether the gathering is formally constituted as a particular church — parish or Kilchhöre. Precisely what elements must be present to constitute a legal organization it was left to Calvin to prescribe; but there can be no doubt that the principle was already fixed by Zwingli. This is essentially the Catholic position: different as were the forms which each required for the legal constitution of the Church, they were both agreed that

<sup>13</sup> For references see Sohm, particularly p. 639, n. 12.

it was the *form* which legally determined whether any particular assembly of Christians was a church or not.

It is interesting to note how largely Zwingli's line of reasoning was determined by practical considerations. On the one hand it was meant as an apology for his position as against the claims of Rome; on the other, it was designed to protect the order of the Church as against the Anabaptist sectaries. According to Zwingli's reasoning, the Roman Church (which was only a particular church or Kilchhöre) had no ecumenical authority, but only a local authority like every other church: it could not legislate for the whole of Christendom, as it claimed to do, but only for itself,—granting that it was a church at all. On the other hand the formless multitudes of Anabaptist enthusiasts were not authorized to legislate even for themselves, for they did not constitute a particular church or Kilchhöre. The same argument availed against the pope and the Councils. The pope with the whole college of cardinals, or even with a universal council, had no ecumenical authority,—*neither he nor they had any authority at all*, because they did not constitute a “particular church,” and, as we have seen, Zwingli entirely repudiated for the Church the notion of representative authority. It was the representative principle that was then relied upon to justify the Roman claim. Rome was the representative Church; the Councils were authoritative because—and in so far as—they were representative. This was not a Catholic idea: on the contrary it was the pagan notion of secular government which the Catholic Church had succeeded in abolishing even from the secular sphere. It was essentially the idea of the social contract, which the Renaissance rediscovered, and which was



destined to prevail more and more both in Church and State.

There are several other significant peculiarities of Zwingli's system which are more or less closely related to the above line of reasoning. It is an obvious deduction that the authority which is exercised by the particular church, though it is the authority of the bride of Christ, is not in reality the authority of Church government, but only of congregational government — that is to say, denominational government. Government was regarded chiefly as *discipline*, and so continues to be in all Reformed Churches. But the discipline which was exercised by the congregation did not exclude from the Church visible, but only from the congregation. The power of the keys, the power to bind and to loose, was not a part of government, and it did not belong to the congregation, but to the pastor or preacher. It was in reality no power or authority at all, but merely a general declaration of the terms upon which salvation (forgiveness of sins) was — or was not — to be secured: — that is, it was identical with preaching, and the preacher as such, having no authority in matters of discipline and government, was not authorized to apply the general declaration to a particular case. The exceedingly abstract character of Zwingli's philosophy is here especially in evidence.<sup>14</sup>

This line of thought explains, too, the contrast that Zwingli drew between the ministry of the word, and government. As the preacher has no authority over discipline or government, so the congregation on its

<sup>14</sup> The Book of Common Prayer reflects this notion in the "Declaration of Absolution" for the daily offices. On the other hand the general absolution in the Communion office, and still more the particular absolution in the Visitation of the Sick, show what various influences were at work in the Anglican Church.



part has no authority to minister the word. It has authority over the preacher's office (including appointment and dismissal), for this belongs to government; it has authority to establish by decree a form of faith; but, paradoxically enough, it is not empowered to exercise the ministry of the word. These two functions, the ministry of the word and government, were here separated for the first time. Notwithstanding Calvin's modification of the theory, they are still regarded in the Reformed Churches as contrasted functions.

It is well known that Zwingli was never able to put his theory of Church government into effect. To the republican magistrates of Zurich, the Council of Two Hundred, he turned over the whole government of the Church, including excommunication: he could trust, he said, the astute councillors to govern wisely, as he could not trust "the simple congregation or church." The Council governed in the name, and with the assumed consent, of the Church; but it really governed absolutely, and the power which was placed in its hands in the beginning it had no mind to relinquish.

It was Calvin that put into practical operation Zwingli's theoretical program of Church government, giving it thereby a definite and permanent form. At the same time his strong practical sense, and particularly his genius for organization, led him to make modifications, which in a few instances amounted to a contradiction of one or another of Zwingli's doctrines.

What Zwingli and other Reformed leaders were unable or unwilling to do, in the matter of according the power of ecclesiastical government to the Church, Calvin in a measure accomplished. The magistrates of Geneva, however, were naturally determined to retain the

power which they held, and it was not without a severe struggle that Calvin succeeded in vindicating to the Church the most essential elements of spiritual government, particularly the exercise of the ban. The solution was an inadequate one, for though the Consistory (the ecclesiastical organ which Calvin established) exercised discipline over the laity, the civic Council retained the exclusive right of disciplining the clergy, together with the power of appointment to office and the exercise of other important ecclesiastical functions. Moreover, the twelve "elders" that composed the Consistory were appointed by the councillors out of their own number and were officially known as their deputies, though Calvin insisted upon regarding them as representatives of the Church. It was Calvin himself, in his personal capacity as spiritual leader of the Genevan Church, who struck the true note of independence in spiritual affairs which has broadly characterized the Reformed Churches. The Scotch Churches for instance, whether Free or Established, have furnished a notable example of spiritual independence and autonomy.

It would be an anachronism, however, to attribute to Calvin our modern ideal of separation of Church and State. His Church, legally organized as it was, and that, too, after the pattern of civil government, partook too much of the nature of the state, and moved too nearly on the same plane, to permit of independence without rivalry. Calvin's own ideal was a Church which should be the official conscience of the state:—his was essentially the ideal of a theocracy. Complete independence from the state was not a Reformed ideal: it was developed by the practical emergency in which those Churches found themselves that were obliged, like the English Presbyterians, to assert their principles

against a hostile government.<sup>15</sup> The question of the relation of the Church to the Civil Magistrate occupies an important place in all the Reformed confessions, for like all other questions of government it is regarded as an article of faith! The definition which the Westminster Confession gives on this point is no longer serviceable in view of American conditions, and it has been altered by all the Reformed Churches which accept this standard.

In the very fact of putting into practical execution Zwingli's theory of Church government, Calvin found himself obliged to make two important modifications of it. In the first place, he gave a religious sanction to the power of government as exercised by the congregation, by recognizing (unlike Zwingli) that ecclesiastical government or discipline is an exercise of the power of the keys which was accorded by Christ to his Church. In the second place, he furnished the practical machinery for the exercise of discipline by the congrega-

<sup>15</sup> We have a mighty contempt nowadays for the benighted ignorance which failed to recognize the self-evident truth that Church and State are in their nature separate and must be independent. But I take it that we have still no deeply reasoned solution of this vexed problem of our forefathers;— we have furnished no new solution for it at all, but have simply contrived to ignore it. We take as a matter of course what is now so obviously a matter of necessity. At bottom it is the state that ignores the Church. In our modern states, and especially in America, Church and State are no longer coördinates—they cannot be related to one another, neither can they be opposed— simply because there is no single Church in any way commensurate with the state. All that the state recognizes is a multitude of *religious societies*,— Christian or other, it makes no difference. If in America, for instance, there should be but one organic Christian society— one Church— I fancy that the old problem must again be recognized as a burning one. There is no solution for it except in the sincere recognition that the Church is a spiritual entity, and as such can never be coördinate with the state. But that recognition at the same time involves the inference that the Church cannot be organized in the terms of a secular society, that is, in terms of the state.

tion, by recognizing the principle of representative government, which Zwingli had denied.

For all this, however, he did not do away with the radical distinction that Zwingli had drawn between the two functions of ministering the word and of government. The pastor or teacher as such did not have any power of government, simply because he was not regarded as a representative of the congregation ; and the power of government which was exercised by the congregation or their representatives was not grounded (as by Luther) upon the fact that they were all taught of God, and so essentially empowered to perform all acts belonging to the ministry of the word. It is manifest that a power such as this could never be delegated. The two functions remain essentially separate: to *each* one of them Calvin ascribes the power of the keys, and in that he is therefore obliged to distinguish two sorts of authority. The first is the general authority that belongs to the ministry of the word in the proclamation of the Gospel — just as Zwingli understood it. According to Calvin it is only this general authority (which does not include discipline) that is intimated in Matt. 16 : 19 and John 20 : 23. But in Matt. 18 : 18 it was impossible to ignore the reference to discipline — in particular to excommunication — and this power, in conformity with the context, Calvin attributes to the Church. There is no exegetical ground for this distinction. But Calvin's thought is, that the power of binding and loosing which is given to Peter in Matt. 16 : 19 (John 20 : 23) is a personal gift, and is expressly conditioned upon the personal apprehension of the Gospel. Whereas the power of binding and loosing mentioned in Matt. 18 : 18 is not a personal gift, for it is given to the Church, and it is not expressly associated with the word.



It is therefore a different power which is spoken of. The weak point in this reasoning is the minor premise (cf. § 8, pp. 120 sq.). Calvin's meaning, however, is perfectly plain, as he expounds it in the *Institutes* (ed. 1559) lib. IV. c. 10. He explains the first to be not so much a power as a ministry, since it consists merely in freeing souls from the bonds of sin by the proclamation of the Gospel. This is properly the cure of souls. The other power — that of discipline — does not minister to the cure of souls: it consists in the exclusion of sinners from the Church, and it is exercised not so much for the sake of saving the offender as for maintaining the purity of the congregation. This, according to Calvin, is the essential function of Church government or jurisdiction. Here he strikes a note which has been characteristic of the Reformed Churches. This jurisdiction belongs to the Church as a corporation, as a juristic person, not to the disciples as individuals. Calvin's meaning is revealed by his explanation that the power of the Sanhedrin is here transferred to the flock of Christ. The endeavor to explain the government of the Christian Church after the analogy of Jewish — particularly late rabbinical — institutions has ever since been a characteristic of the Reformed Churches.

As has been remarked above, Calvin's second modification of Zwingli's theory was the organization of the Church in the terms of representative government. Given the premise — which was furnished by Zwingli — that the jurisdiction of the Church belongs to it as a legally organized body, nothing could be more natural and logical than Calvin's deduction, that the power which practically could not be exercised by all must be exercised by a few as their representatives. If the Roman Catholic Church was obliged to remodel its



claim upon the representative principle, how much more must Calvin be influenced by it, who was founding a new order in sympathy with the spirit of his age. This was, in fact, one of the most influential ideas of the time, and it is therefore not strange that the reformers found a sanction for it in Scripture.

Influential as this idea was among advanced thinkers of the Renaissance, it was originally a pagan notion and essentially a rationalistic one. Before it could become the ruling force it is to-day, it had to overcome the prejudice which the whole period of the Middle Ages had intrenched in power; to this end it had to gain the adhesion of the multitude, and it needed above all that religious sanction which Calvin gave it by incorporating it in a system of Church government. This principle, which was first applied to the congregation, in the establishment of the local presbytery (the "session") of lay elders, the direct representatives of the people, was afterwards logically extended to the "classical presbytery," representing a number of congregations, and to the council (general assembly), representing the whole denomination. It is a system which is capable of indefinite expansion without weakness: it is at once popular and strong. It is a model of secular government; but it is more utterly lacking in Scriptural analogy, is more thoroughly opposed to the New Testament idea of the Church, than any of the rival forms of government which have been developed from *Catholic* principles. Yet this whole system and every detail of it was — and is — prescribed *jure divino*; and in all the Reformed confessions it is erected into an article of faith on a par with the divinity of our Lord!<sup>16</sup> It is not to be won-

<sup>16</sup> Except in the case of the Independents (Baptists and Congregationalists), who have a *jure divino* system of their own, *without* pres-

dered that the Reformed Churches have been influential in establishing that principle of government in the state which they maintained with so much zeal in the Church.

byteries and ruling elders. Besides, the Congregationalists have lately used their freedom to rid themselves of the whole Calvinistic theology, and with it, of Calvin's doctrine of Church government. The statement in the text is intentionally startling, but it is no exaggeration. The fact here referred to is a characteristic in which the Reformed confessions of faith excel, but which in some degree they share with all Protestant confessions of historic importance, *and with the Roman creeds*. The chief fault is the total lack of perspective in the statement of the Christian faith, the lack of any formal distinction between propositions which are articles of faith, and those which can only be matters of belief or opinion. It is not affirmed here that all the propositions of the creed — the government of the Church by presbyteries, for example — have been accounted of equal importance with the most fundamental truths of theology; but *in so far as they are legally enjoined as articles of faith* they are placed precisely upon a par, — unless it could be claimed that the 1st and 2d articles are by position more important than, for instance, the 31st. The old confessions are still generally retained; — among British and American Presbyterians it is the Westminster Confession, with slight alterations. But their significance has been essentially changed; partly by law, and partly by usage. By law the terms of subscription have been altered from explicit adherence to every article, to acceptance of the system of doctrine as a whole. There is no formal criterion to determine what belongs essentially to the *system* and what does not. Is the doctrine of Church organization an essential part of the Calvinistic system? Or is the doctrine of the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures? It is left for the presbyteries to decide in each individual case. Of so little avail is the legal definition of faith! By usage subscription to the confession is now required only of officers — including the lay elders. The faith which is essential for the admission of lay persons to the Church is not formally defined: it is left to the decision of the individual congregations, represented by the session. This state of affairs is broadly characteristic of all the greater Presbyterian bodies. It may be said of them, too, that few of their teachers will now affirm that their system of government is precisely and indubitably authenticated by Scripture; still fewer believe that this or any other form of government is essential to the valid organization of the Church. All the Presbyterian Churches in America have dropped the Westminster *Form of Church Government and Discipline*, and most of them are therefore left without a creedal statement of the requisite form of congregational organization, though the general organization in synods and councils is prescribed in the Confession (c. xxxi.).

It was not as a theologian or a theorist that Calvin established this system of government, but as a practical politician and ruler. The *fons et origo* was the model Church which he organized at Geneva. A Church which exhibited so strong a government, and so pure a discipline, could not fail to be copied wherever the Reformed theology was received. No one who is at all

At the same time there still exist vestiges of the genuine old Presbyterianism, particularly among the direct off-shoots of the Scottish Churches in America. These people oblige all members to precise agreement upon every article of the confession; and the Westminster standards, which prove too strait for their brethren of the larger Churches, are too liberal for them. For example: in 1858 the Associate and the Associate Reformed Churches "united" and made three sects! — taking the dissident remnants into account. At that time the new organization *added* to the Westminster standards a long creedal statement called *The Testimony*, which is still in force. A few sentences from the Preface will explain the motive of such an addition. "We have said that it is the duty of the church to exhibit, plainly, and explicitly, all the principles of her profession, in a published creed or confession. This duty was discharged with a high degree of faithfulness by the framers of the Westminster Confession. It should, however, not be forgotten, that the church of God, while 'holding fast that whereunto she has attained,' should also strive to be making progress in the attainment of divine truth. . . . Under a solemn conviction of our duty, in this respect, we, as a church, have, in the following document, set forth our views on certain points, which were either not *distinctly* introduced into the Confession of Faith by its framers, or not exhibited with that fullness and explicitness, which the circumstances of the church, the times in which we live, and the views and practices of those around us, demand of us as witnesses of the truth." This is highly significant of the original Reformed attitude in the matter of creeds, though it is only the Scottish Presbyterians that have carried legalistic rigorism to so great an extreme as in the case before us. This Testimony, besides the "more explicit" statement of common articles of Calvinistic doctrine, makes several material additions: among them, the statement that secret societies are inconsistent with Christianity, that slave-holding is a violation of the law of God, "that it is the will of God that the songs contained in the book of Psalms be sung in his worship, . . . to the exclusion of devotional compositions of uninspired men," "that public social covenanting is a moral duty," and that no communion "in sealing ordinances" is to be held with those that think otherwise on any of these points.

acquainted with the history of Calvin's organization of this Church can ignore the fact that his work there was rather the solution of a practical problem than the application of an exegetical theory. What he did was comparatively simple; the congregational organization that he founded had substantially but two factors, corresponding to the two contrasted functions of the Church: the ministry of the word, and government. The ministry of the word was exercised by two officers, the pastor and the doctor (or teacher). It was not specified how many pastors there must be in a congregation.<sup>17</sup> Government was exercised by lay or ruling elders, of whom there must be several in the congregation, constituting the consistory (in Scotland called the session). The theoretical distinction between the ruling and the teaching office suffered a practical exception in the fact that the pastor had a seat in the consistory, and indeed the presidency in it. No act of government or discipline might be performed except in conformity to God's word, and as the official interpreter of the word the pastor had a place in the governing council. To these three—or substantially two—offices was adjoined, as a perfectly perfunctory addendum, the deacon. Deacons were mentioned in the New Testament, so there must be deacons. The Reformed deacons were laymen who administered the alms. But much of the charitable work that had originally been done by the Church had been taken over

<sup>17</sup> The distinction between these two offices was slight. The pastor had to do chiefly with what we now commonly understand by the expression "pastoral care," including the conduct of public worship; the doctor had to do chiefly with instruction, including preaching. The Scottish and English Presbyterians explained that these two offices might be united in one person, and in practice they made no distinction between them. The New England Congregationalists, on the other hand, long maintained the custom of having both a pastor and a doctor in every congregation.



by the state ; moreover, the Protestant Churches at the time of the Reformation were not much distinguished for practical philanthropy ; so the work that fell to the deacons bore a sorry contrast to the important functions performed by these officers in the early Church. In reality the office had no more significance than it had in the English Church, where it was retained by force of precedent as a stage of probation for the priesthood.<sup>18</sup>

Ignoring for the moment the office of deacon, and the unimportant distinction between pastor and doctor, it is evident that Calvin's Church must have had just such officers as he gave it, even if the New Testament had no hints to offer on the subject of ecclesiastical organization. Without the preaching office the Church of Christ can hardly be conceived, and it was of course this office that all the reformers emphatically exalted. The lay representatives were obviously necessary to give practical effect to Zwingli's doctrine that government belonged to the congregation as such. Besides, in establishing this office Calvin was evidently influenced by the models of civil government.<sup>19</sup> He expressly likens the consistory of lay elders to the civic council. At all events the system was not established by force of proof texts, nor were the Scriptural proofs which were afterwards sought out to justify it severely scrutinized by Calvin's

<sup>18</sup> In America the Presbyterian Churches frequently fail to appoint deacons. When there are deacons in a congregation they pass the plate. They have no function in relation to the Lord's Supper, nor any part in government or teaching. In the Congregational Churches (including the Baptist) the deacons perform the same insignificant ministry ; but since in these Churches there is no other lay officer — no other officer, that is, except the pastor — the deacons are selected from among the chief persons in the congregation. Owing to the democratic constitution of these Churches, which allows of no government by representation, the deacons actually (though not in theory) enjoy the leadership in congregational affairs which naturally falls to official persons.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Instit. lib. IV. caps. 11 and 12.*



contemporaries. The system was acceptable to the majority, and it was maintained against the minority by the secular arm.

Yet Calvin himself claimed for this scheme divine authority. Precisely these offices, and these offices alone, are, according to Calvin, prescribed by Scripture as of perpetual obligation in the Church. The offices of apostle and prophet were temporary, belonging only to the first age of the Church. On the other hand, the office of bishop or presbyter (which Calvin regarded as identical and as equivalent to pastor) is a perpetual office. The office of teacher is also mentioned in the New Testament, and in the very nature of the case must be perpetual. These are the spiritual offices. But in 1 Tim. 5:17 Calvin saw an intimation of another kind of presbyter, who did not labor like the bishop-presbyter in the word and in doctrine, but was distinguished by the fact that he ruled well. The "governments" mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:28 were supposed to refer to the same office. The "helps" mentioned in the same verse described the deacon's office. These were the principal proofs for the distinctive institution of Presbyterianism. A narrower ground is hardly conceivable than that on which the English Dissenters waged their long battle with the Church. The proofs which were later adduced in support of government by classical presbyteries were of a still more precarious character.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> There is a Waldensian tradition of fabulous character which for a long time past has been popularly regarded as an important historical support for the whole system of Presbyterian government. The fable narrates that in the time of Pope Sylvester, when the Church was first enticed from the way of pure doctrine and discipline by the imperial favor of Constantine, the predecessors of the Waldensians separated themselves from the worldly professors of Christianity, and retired into the

The constitution which Calvin gave to the Church at Geneva corresponds precisely to the Reformed idea of the visible Church. The visible Church is the legally constituted congregation, and the authority of the visible Church is the legally exercised authority of the congregation as a self-governing corporation.<sup>21</sup>

Calvin did recognize (unlike Zwingli and in conformity with Christ's word) that the visible Church is found wherever even two or three are gathered in the name of the Lord. But the admitted proposition was rendered void by his doctrine of Church organization. If it is essential to the Church that it be organized with pastors, elders, deacons, and teachers, it is not *every* gathering for Christian worship or instruction that can be deemed a manifestation of the visible Church, but only the *organized congregation*, just as in Zwingli's view. This consequence has been drawn by the Reformed party. Calvin himself, following Luther, mentioned only the word and the sacraments as the notes of the visible Church. But the Reformed confessions have logically carried out Calvin's line of thought, requiring, as the *third note*, the right Church discipline, that is,

remote valleys of Piedmont, where they preserved unimpaired the primitive norm of Church doctrine and government, which the Catholic Church quickly lost. Finally, the Waldensian refugees who found asylum in Geneva imparted this system of government to Calvin. The story is of course absurd, for there is no trace of the sect before the twelfth century, and they knew no other than the episcopal form of government until the sixteenth century, when the Waldensian refugees, returning from Switzerland, brought with them the theology and polity of Calvin. Nevertheless the support that the Waldensian missions receive from Scottish and American Presbyterians is still prompted in part by this superstition. The facts have often been published by German and English historians, and they are stated with perfect candor by Professor Comba, of the Waldensian School of Theology in Florence, in his *Histoire de Vaudois*, pp. 289 sqq. and *passim*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Sohm, p. 645.

Church government with lay elders, etc. A particular legal constitution is necessary in order that the gathering of believers may be a Church. This order is prescribed by *divine law*. This is the assumption of most of the Reformed confessions. Church government thus becomes, as it is for Catholicism, an *object of faith*.<sup>22</sup>

About the Anglican principles of Church government no such succinct and definite statement can be made as in the case of the Lutheran and Reformed. Not one principle but many have contended for the mastery within the English Church; and withal, the Church has no dogma on the subject. Neither the Lutheran, the Reformed, nor the Catholic principle of Church government has been authoritatively recognized, nor has any new principle distinct from these been broached. It is not unnatural to argue that, from the medieval *form* of organization which has been retained, the medieval *doctrine* of the ministry may be assumed. But this is supported neither by the authoritative formularies which date from the first age of the English Reformation, nor by the views which were then predominant among the reforming theologians. The opportunist policy of the State was not favorable to doctrinaire consistency in the application of any one theory. The

<sup>22</sup> I translate the above paragraph from Sohm (p. 656). In this context he cites, among other references, the *Confessio Scoticana* I. Art. 18: *Notas ergo verae ecclesiae Dei credimus, confitemur et profiteamur, primum et ante omnia veram praedicationem verbi Dei — deinde recta sacramentorum Jesu Christi administratio — postremo loco est disciplina ecclesiastica recte administrata, sicut Dei verbum praescribit ad reprimendum vitium et virtutem fovendam. Ubique praedictae hae notae videntur et tempore aliquo continuantur (etsi numerus duo vel tres non excedat) illic proculdubio esse ecclesiam Christi.* It is to be observed that congregations, even if they are rightly organized, are not to be accounted churches until these notes have been observed to "continue for a certain time."

established form of Church government, however, contradicted the Reformed principle of congregational representation, and it was hardly favorable to the Lutheran principle which made all ecclesiastical authority dependent upon the ministry of the word. The Catholic doctrine of the ministry has been strenuously supported since the time of the Stuarts, and it was probably never so generally entertained as it is to-day. But on the other hand, the organization of the American Episcopal Church was strongly influenced by the Reformed principle of representative government; and a reorganization along similar lines is now desired by many in England, though the notion of representative authority is in fact quite foreign to primitive as well as to early Catholic institutions. The theories which have already been briefly described, together with the Catholic theory which is to be traced in the subsequent chapters of this book, will enable one to understand the point of all the controversies that have been waged within the Anglican Church or about it. To have no theory of Church government was once accounted a source of weakness, but it has become now, in the present state of Protestant Christendom, a signal advantage.

## § 5, DENOMINATIONAL CONTROVERSY

It was in Great Britain that the Reformed principles were carried to their extremest conclusions; it was there that they provoked the bitterest controversy; and there that they met the conclusive test which demonstrated their practical futility — the impossibility, namely, of agreement upon any particular system of government which could claim to be deduced therefrom. The principles above stated serve not only to



explain the point of the Puritan controversy, but almost to prognosticate its history. The history of this controversy hardly needs to be written, for its character is best understood from a study of the Westminster Assembly, which was the perfect epitome of the dissenting movement which preceded it, and of the sectarian development which followed. English dissent seemed to represent a remarkable unity of opinion in the contest with the English Church. But it was only a concord in dissent — that is, in negation; and when it found its opportunity for affirmative statement, in the Westminster Assembly, it at once manifested all the disruptive tendencies which were inherent in its principles, and which have been exhibited in the subsequent history of English Protestantism.

The controversy between the Lutheran and the Reformed Churches was more or less academic in character; for after the first generation neither organic nor confessional unity was thought of, and there was the less occasion for conflict because the two confessions were professed for the most part in different states. Very different was it in England, where the Genevan sympathizers were obliged to submit to the discipline and ritual of the English Church, and where the policy of enforcing uniformity exceedingly exasperated the controversy. According to the Anglican view, uniformity in these respects might the more reasonably be enforced — so long as nothing was done *contrary* to God's word — because only such matters were involved as *at bottom* were indifferent to religion. Not so the Dissenters. The form of government was for them a question of conscience, according to the common Reformed view; and in the heat of controversy they were led to include rites and ceremonies in the same class of



*jure divino* institutions, — advancing in this beyond the extremest limit of Calvinistic legalism. They went so far as to assert the trenchant principle, that nothing is lawful in the Church which is not expressly or implicitly sanctioned in the word of God.

It is exceedingly necessary to note the significance of this principle, for it was at the bottom of the whole controversy of the Dissenters with the Church of England: it explains the fatal embarrassment of the Westminster Assembly, and accounts for almost every sectarian division that has followed it.

This principle has been strangely confused with the common watchword of Protestantism which is enunciated in Art. vi. of the English Church, — “Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.” This article affirms that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Whatever be the position now of the Thirty Nine Articles, this statement maintains its importance, being substantially a part of the king’s oath and of the priest’s vow. As a mere theoretical proposition this statement (whether in the form in which it occurs in the Articles, or in the Ordinal) must be deemed absolutely worthless. It cannot properly be regarded as an article of faith, for it is essentially a negative proposition. It falls short of the measure of the primitive faith that “all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline in righteousness.” The one positive statement it does make — however true it may be — can be proved neither by the Scriptures themselves, nor by any abstract

reasoning. Even this statement, however, is affirmed simply as a premise for a negative conclusion. But in reality such criticism is not to the point. Properly understood, this article is not intended as an article of faith, nor is it a theoretical proposition at all: it is rather a practical principle of ecclesiastical administration. Formally the statement is negative, but in its practical issue the principle is a positive one. It was one of the great positive bulwarks of the Reformation, and it remains a necessary bulwark of liberty so long as encroachment is to be feared from the same quarter. As an article of common consent among all Protestants, as a statement, not of theory but of fact, as a rubric which prescribes the utmost that may be legally exacted of faith, it has an enduring value. It was, to be sure, a rough-and-ready way of deciding the merits of the multitudinous traditions that had overlaid Christianity; but no finer test could be applied to them with any hope of attaining practical accord.<sup>1</sup> This test lopped off at

<sup>1</sup> The Roman Church was already embarrassed by its own traditions. It has since invented its own way of getting rid of them. Pius IX. is reported to have said (and I believe the statement has never been denied): *La tradition c'est moi!* And an English Cardinal exclaimed, after the Vatican Council: "Thank God, we are now done with tradition." It has never been the fashion of the English Church to minimize the importance of tradition, so far as it is expressed in the genuine writings or in the institutions of the early Church. The Preface to the Ordinal refers expressly to "early authors" as well as to Scripture in proof of the antiquity (apostolic character) of the Catholic ministry. This is consistent with Art. vi., simply because the form of the ministry is *not made an article of faith*, — as it was according to both the Catholic and the Reformed view. It is only when this knot is definitely cut by the Protestant principle, that scrupulosity can yield to charity, and the practical affairs of the Church can be accommodated. This principle is broader than what seems now to be the law in the English Church (for instance, in the prohibition of incense); and narrower than the Anglo-Catholics would interpret it who seek to impose medieval dogma as the implication of the Catholic ritual.

one stroke the heterogeneous accretions of a millennium and a half. Something of value may have shared the fate of the abuses. Perhaps — but about this men differ. That nothing essential was lost all Protestants agree. It must be noted, however, that this article did not exclude any private belief or practice. Beliefs which lacked Scriptural proof might be entertained, but they might not be exacted. Ceremonies and forms of government were retained without any attempt to justify them on Scriptural grounds. But all scruple about such things was removed when it was understood that they were not to be regarded as necessary to salvation nor as matters of faith.

Men talk vaguely of “the Reformation settlement” — there is no other settlement than this, nor ever was. It did not settle everything, by any means, though it settled much. It allowed of one excess which was its grave defect, and it is by the remedy of this that our modern time is likely to attain a more complete settlement. The Protestant principle should now read: Whatsoever is *not necessary to salvation, whether in the Scriptures or out of them*, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith.<sup>2</sup>

The proposition maintained by the Dissenters was not

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 150 sq. § 10, n. E. This is certainly the notion which is becoming dominant in our time, — notably among Congregationalists and Anglicans. At the same time the example quoted above in § 4, note 16, shows the persistence of the contrary principle, which the early Dissenters were at least inclined to *act* upon, namely, that *everything* that may be proved by Scripture is to be required of men, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, — with the restriction that no man be *permitted* to believe whatsoever may not be proved thereby. Protestantism is not a *faith*, but it is an important principle conditioning belief. The Protestant principle, rightly understood, is a condition of peace and unity: the Reformed principle, in the form in which it has been commonly urged, is necessarily a cause of scruple and division.

a mere amplification of the common Protestant statement, nor was it merely a more stringent application of it: it was, so far as it covered the same ground, its express logical contrary; and in so far as it extended the operation of this principle from what is to be *believed* to what is to be *done*, it transformed a guarantee of freedom into a bond of scruple. Protestants maintained, that nothing but this (namely, what is to be proved from Scripture) may be *exacted* as an article of faith: the Dissenters asserted that nothing but this may be *permitted* in the Church — either to be believed or to be *done*.<sup>3</sup> The Dissenters had supreme confidence

<sup>3</sup> If any one doubt that the trenchant principle enunciated in the text was actually asserted by the early English Puritans and commonly entertained by them, it will be easy to verify my statement by referring to Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, the Second Book of which was written expressly to combat this principle, while the Third Book deals with particular applications of it. A fair notion of the position of the Dissenters may be got from Hooker's quotations from Cartwright. But it is certainly unfortunate that the original works of that author — as well as those of other Puritan authors of his time — are inaccessible to most readers, there being but few copies of them in America. I fancy that there are many thousand copies of Hooker's work in America to one of Cartwright's. It is a striking turn of fortune which has made Richard Hooker famous in the land of the Puritans while Thomas Cartwright is forgotten! Cartwright hardly deserves the oblivion into which he has fallen. He has justly been called "the father of English Presbyterians" — and we may add, of English Puritans, for in his time these two parties were not distinguished. He was a controversial writer of rare talent and training, and in addition to that, he possessed profound learning in both Biblical and patristic sources. His writings may with the more confidence be accepted as representative, because he took no part with the extremists of his faction. . . . Those who have opportunity to consult Cartwright's works will find that the statement made above in the text does not express the full rigor of the Puritan principle. (The *Second Reply* is printed *seriatim* with Whitgift's *Answer* in the edition of the Parker Society.) See especially pp. 20-35, 58-60, of the First Reply — the full title of the work is *A Replie to an Answere made to M. Doctor Whitegifte Against the Admonition to the Parliament by T. C. 1573*. In Hooker's work it is cited as "C. T. l. i." The books which Hooker cites respectively as l. ii. and l. iii. are: *The Second Replie of*



in the sufficiency of Scripture as a law-book for government and worship; and they never wavered in this belief until, in the Westminster Assembly, they had an opportunity of putting it to a practical test in the elaboration of a concrete system of worship and discipline. This principle was of a piece with the legalism of the Reformed Churches of the Continent, but only the asperity of the English controversy could have brought it to so extreme an expression and so rigid an application.

The difference between the Dissenters and the Church was a radical one, and the issue was all the more sharply defined because both parties were at one in their theology. The English Church in Elizabeth's time was so thoroughly Calvinistic that a preacher was likely to incur popular odium (as in the well-known case of Hooker), if he sought to modify the severity of this doctrine. The sequel proved, too, that the two parties were not really at odds about the policy (or principle) of enforcing uniformity; but only about the character of the government and ritual that ought to be imposed.

The principle maintained by the early Dissenters was admirably suited to their immediate purpose, it was an excellent weapon of offensive criticism; but when their own opportunity of construction came, the sword which they had wielded with so much success turned against themselves, and it had too long been their chief weapon to be then lightly discarded.

The controversy of the Nonconformists before the Westminster Assembly, like that of their successors

*Thomas Cartwright: agaynst Maister Doctor Witgiftes second Answer. 1675. and The rest of the second replie of Thomas Cartvuriht: agaynst Master Doctor Vuhitgifts second answer, &c. (Amsterdam) 1577.*



after it, appears to have turned more upon questions of ritual than of government. But this appearance is due to the fact that the ritual of the English Church was a field which presented more numerous individual points of attack—for a policy of pin-pricks, as we should say nowadays.

That the Book of Common Prayer was the most admirable liturgy ever in use, is not to say that it had no faults. The criticism of the Dissenters has been in part justified by the revisions which the book has undergone. In regard to the American revisions particularly, it is interesting to remark how many of the old complaints have been met, either by express alterations or by permissive rubrics. But it is no less interesting to note how few are found who care to take advantage of the permission, — for instance, to omit the sign of the cross in baptism, or the *Gloria Patri* after each Psalm. It is evident that the point of the offence was removed with the compulsion. Most of the complaints on the score of ritual were, however, so trivial or so perverse that the modern Presbyterian can regard them with as little sympathy as does the modern Anglican.

In reality, the fundamental dispute was on the question of government: this is the subject upon which almost the whole battle in the Westminster Assembly was fought, and upon this question the hopes of the Assembly for a settlement of English Christianity were wrecked.<sup>4</sup> It is impossible to ignore the political ele-

<sup>4</sup> The doctrinal statement—that is, the Confession and the catechisms—was the only enduring work of the Assembly, and that was hardly more than a by-product, being prepared mostly in committee during intervals of the discussion on government, and occupying only a few months out of the five years during which the Assembly sat. The Confession was the more rapidly completed because of the work of revising the Thirty Nine Articles which had occupied the first seventy-five sessions—one of the most futile works of the Assembly, which was

ments which contributed to embarrass the work of the Assembly and finally to defeat its aim. During the

interrupted by Parliament before its completion. Ussher's Irish Articles of 1615 had been largely used in this first work, and they constituted also the most important source of the Confession. Even the Confession, however, has had no great significance for England, for which it was prepared; but only for Scotland and America. The Directory of Worship, prepared in as short a time, has indeed had an influence, but of a negative sort. It succeeded in abolishing the liturgies that had hitherto been in use in the Presbyterian Churches, but it never won general observance for itself, and was soon utterly neglected. In drawing up a mere directory, including no formal prayers, the Assembly was not moved by a theoretical objection to prescribed forms of worship, which all of the Reformed Churches used, but by the desire to effect uniformity, — it being recognized that the English would not accept the Scottish book already in use, nor the Scots discard their book in favor of an English one. The Independents immediately objected to the Directory that it had more rubrics than the Book of Common Prayer. It was indeed the first instance of a manual of worship that contained *nothing but rubrics*. Before reaching this point in their labors the Assembly had abandoned the notion of justifying all the details of worship by the express sanction of Scripture: they claimed for their Directory only that it was a convenient form of worship, agreeable to Scriptural principles, and in harmony with the use of the Reformed Churches. The Assembly did a grave though unintended damage in abolishing the old formulas of worship without succeeding in establishing the Directory in their place. The Scottish Church is only now beginning to restore its old book of worship (in an enriched form), and the majority of Protestant Churches in America still suffer the impoverishment. By far the greater part of the 1163 sessions of the Assembly, extending over nearly five years, was occupied with questions of government. The futility of it all may be measured by the fact that although all the formulas adopted by the Assembly were strictly Presbyterian, Independency has been from that time forth the prevailing type of Nonconformity in England. That the Assembly provided the Scottish Kirk with the so-called *Form of Church Government* which it still retains along with the Confession, is a matter of no substantial consequence; for this is merely a formula; whereas the form itself, the actual system of government, had already been for a long time established; and the Presbyterianism of America is derived from the Kirk, not from the Assembly. What the Scots call *The Form of Church Government* was called by the Assembly *Propositions concerning Church Government and Ordination of Ministers*. This was their first work on the subject of government, and it is consistently wrought out upon the principle of *jus divinum*. It occupied them from Oct. 12, 1643, to Nov. 8, 1644. This was the most interesting period of the Assembly.

first years of its session the Long Parliament depended upon the Scottish armies for maintaining itself against the King; and the Assembly was consequently subjected to the dictation of a handful of Scottish commissioners, who succeeded for the time in holding it strictly to the lines of Presbyterian polity, but fomented thereby a party spirit which made subsequent concord impossible. The Assembly faced the alternative of deciding all questions in conformity with the principles of the Scottish Kirk, or of seeing the King restored to power and themselves dispersed, — if they did not suffer also the penalty of *praemunire*, which they had incurred by

But it was at once evident that the majority of the Parliament, though they were ready to substitute a Presbyterian form of government for the Episcopal in the National Church, were by no means disposed to admit the *jure divino* claims which were made for it in the Propositions. The Assembly was therefore obliged to spend the rest of the year 1644 and the early part of 1645 in the preparation of a *Directory for Church Government*, which contained the same system, but shorn of its divine sanctions. Soon after this they became involved in the debates about the autonomy of the Church — that is, its relation to the civil magistrate — which brought them into irreconcilable conflict with the Parliament. The last act of this notable assembly was ignominious: it gradually melted away in the pitiful attempt to answer the nine Queries on the *jus divinum* of Church Government with which the Parliament had artfully posed them. From first to last this was the *crux* that baffled all their endeavors. It is interesting to note how small were the powers granted to the Assembly by the ordinance of Parliament which convened it. They were “to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, *as shall be proposed unto them* by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, and to give their advice and counsel therein.” And it is finally expressly provided that they shall not “assume to exercise any jurisdiction, power, or authority ecclesiastical whatsoever.” There is a short history of the Assembly by Mitchell: *The Westminster Assembly, its History and Standards*, 1884. But no history gives so vivid an idea of the character and spirit of the Assembly as one may get by following the debates of a single session as they are described in Lightfoot’s *Journal* (*Works*, ed. 1875, vol. XIII.) or in the *Letters and Journals* of Baillie, one of the Scottish commissioners. Both of these make lively reading. Much dryer are *The Minutes of the Assembly* (edited by Mitchell and others) and Gillespie’s *Notes*.

assembling contrary to the King's command. With the defeat of the parliamentary armies in the West, the English found themselves obliged to subscribe to the Solemn League and Covenant, which, as the Scots understood it, bound the nation to abolish prelacy and establish the Presbyterian system. The English interpretation of the Covenant was by no means free from duplicity. The subsequent triumph of Cromwell and the Independents relieved them from the Scots, but it set the Presbyterian majority of the Assembly in hopeless opposition to the government.

For all this it is by no means unreasonable to believe that the Assembly might have exercised a far-reaching and permanent influence upon the National Church, and perhaps upon the political history of England, if it had not clung so tenaciously to the tenet of the *jus divinum* of Church government. The principle that no feature of government might be adopted without the express warrant of Scripture, was never able to pass the muster of a formal vote in the Assembly, but it nevertheless was the assumption that underlay all the debates.

The Assembly itself was chiefly responsible for the irreconcilable hostility which was developed between Presbyterians and Independents. The divines met under favorable auspices. The formal power accorded them by Parliament was small, but the moral authority of the body was great. The few loyal Churchmen who were members of the Assembly voluntarily absented themselves from its sessions, and the remainder represented a substantial unanimity of opinion upon many of the practical reforms which they desired to effect in the National Church. It seems likely that they might have abolished Episcopacy and even established a system which was virtually Presbyterian, if they had been



content to justify its details upon grounds of practical expediency, instead of making each of them a point of conscience by the claim of divine right.<sup>5</sup>

But how bold a work it was the Assembly actually undertook to do, and how certain it was of failure! With their little gilt-edged English Bibles in their hands — about which Selden taunted them — they proposed to themselves nothing less than to establish a new and complete system of Church government upon the *ipsisima verba* of Scripture. Fancy an assembly of scholars got together to-day for such a purpose! What they

<sup>5</sup> Baillie says (*Letters and Journals*, vol. II. p. 111): “All of them were ever willing to admit elders in a prudential way (*i. e.* as an expedient of human arrangement), but this to us seemed most dangerous and unhappy, and therefore was peremptorily rejected. We trust to carry at last, with the contentment of sundry once opposite, and the silence of all, their divine and Scriptural institution.” “This,” he adds, “is a point of high consequence, and on no other do we expect so great difficulty except alone on Independency, wherewith we purpose not to meddle in haste *till it please God to advance our army, which we expect will much assist our arguments.*” When it proved to be God’s pleasure to advance Cromwell’s army rather than the Scots, the astute Baillie absented himself from the theoretical discussions of the Assembly to intrigue against the Parliament in London, and he was much disgusted when his schemes “played nipshot,” as he put it. It was especially the intrigues of the Scottish Commissioners that roused Milton’s indignation, as expressed in his well known poem:

Because you have thrown off your prelate lord,  
And with stiff vows renounced his liturgy,  
To seize the widowed whore Plurality  
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,  
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword  
To force our consciences that Christ set free,  
And ride us with a classic hierarchy  
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rotherford?  
By shallow Edwards and Scotch what d’ye call:  
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,  
Your plots and packings worse than those of Trent,  
That so the Parliament  
May, with their wholesome and preventive shears,  
Clip your phylacteries, though balk your ears,  
And succour our just fears,  
When they shall read this clearly in your charge,  
New Presbyterian is but Old Priest writ large.



actually did, however, was merely to provide Scriptural proof-texts for the Presbyterian system which was already established in Scotland. But if conscientiously done, even this was a mighty task.

It was necessary, as they conceived, to prove in the first place that all the offices of the Church *inherited in Christ*—for otherwise he could not have imparted them! Next, all the officers of the primitive Church had to be enumerated, and those which were extraordinary distinguished from those which were ordinary and permanent. One can fancy how difficult it was to adduce the Scriptural proof of this distinction. For instance, no one doubted that the office of deacon was meant to be permanent. But how to prove it? The deacon's function was to administer the charity of the congregation. It was long time debated whether the permanency of this office was not proved by the assertion of 1 Cor. 13:8 that "Charity never faileth." But not being able to agree upon that, they had to be satisfied with two proof-texts which did *not* prove it—1 Tim. 3:8-15 and Acts 6:1-4.

It further had to be proved what powers and functions belonged to each office. Here, too, they were obliged to content themselves with poor proofs or none at all. Their embarrassments never brought them to the point of repudiating their principle, but it is amusing to see how they slipped over their difficulties. For instance, when it had been decided that the pastoral office was permanent, it remained to prove among other things that the administration of the Holy Communion belonged to the pastor alone. About the proposition itself all were agreed—but where was the Scriptural proof? At this juncture "Old Mr. Wilkinson, senior"—the double qualification suggests a picture of queru-

lous age — “did very roundly answer, that he did never hear from the learned such a question, as, whether the pastor hath to do more in the sacrament than others. And the rest of the Assembly cried the thing down exceedingly as not worthy to be answered; and so was the proposition ordered.”<sup>6</sup>

The divines of the Assembly were as sincere a body of men as ever met in a religious council. Even the characteristic incidents above quoted prove a certain sturdy sincerity of principle, — though, to be sure, it was sincerity in the maintenance of prejudice and in defence of the *partie prise*. They felt, particularly in the earlier period, a sense of immense responsibility: they conceived that they were settling the order of the English Church for all time to come. This feeling was sometimes very naïvely expressed. No text was debated at greater length and with more heat than 1 Tim. 5:17, adduced in proof of the proposition that the ruling elder is a presbyter. The text was finally rejected — much to the disgust of the Scots. In the course of this important debate a number of the divines implored the Assembly to proceed carefully, urging that any “accommodation” upon this point would be “a political act, fit for Parliament, not for us; and *that it will leave all posterity in the dark.*”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Lightfoot's *Journal*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Lightfoot's *Journal*, p. 76. Having discarded the classical proof-text for the ruling elder, the Assembly rested their proof of the office chiefly upon the fact that “there were in the Jewish church elders of the people that were joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the church,” 2 Chron. 19:8-10 being brought to prove it. They were also disposed to attribute great weight to the mention of *seniores* in the Christian writings of the third century. The Assembly found itself obliged to leave all posterity in the dark in regard to the offices of doctor and pastor — namely, whether they were essentially distinct, or might properly be combined in one person. About this dispute Mitchell says (*op. cit.* pp. 184 sq.): “The Independents contended not only that the

There was probably never a religious assembly which exercised such perfect freedom of debate, particularly upon the questions at issue between Presbyterians and Independents. The proof-texts advanced by the Presbyterian majority were as ruthlessly sifted by the Independents as ever they could have been by the Prelatists; and what was finally carried by a party vote issued from the debate shorn of all moral authority. This severe test was virtually the end of *jure divino* Presbyterianism. The Independents from this time forward adopted a much more liberal attitude, and even among Presbyterians the theory has since slowly fallen into decay.

After the debates on the ruling elder (which are the most interesting reading of all) came debates on the subject of Presbyteries. This critical question was forced upon the Assembly at an earlier stage than they were willing to consider it (see above, note 5), by a practical emergency which the Parliament ordered them to meet at once. There was an urgent necessity of ordaining new ministers to fill the places vacated by loyal Churchmen, and so to keep the people in patience with the Parliament. The Assembly, however, was totally unable to agree as to whether ordination belonged *jure divino* to the particular congregation or to the classical presbytery, and they were hardly to be brought to even a temporary and practical accommodation. It was suggested that until they could come to agreement upon this principle the bishops might be

offices were distinct, but also that every congregation, as far as possible, should have its doctor as well as its pastor. The Scots rather inclined to distinguish the offices, but to hold, with their own second book of discipline, that the chief use of the doctor was in universities and schools. But the English divines, who were many of them reluctantly giving up bishops because they had no proper divine institution to urge for them, were altogether averse to recognizing any divine institution of the doctor as essentially a distinct office bearer from the pastor."

allowed to ordain, but they could not agree that episcopal ordination was valid. These were the longest and most arid debates of the Assembly. At this time the weight of argument as well as of arms was on the side of the Independents, — for it is as plain as day that there are no proofs in the New Testament for general Presbyteries (ruling over several congregations), for synods, or for general assemblies. The breach between Presbyterians and Independents here proved irreconcilable. But the Presbyterians still had a majority in the Assembly, and they persisted in decreeing their *jure divino* Presbyteries — only to have them nullified by Parliament.<sup>8</sup>

The preceding note gives a hint of the opposition which might be expected from Parliament when it came to the question of ecclesiastical autonomy. The Parliament had good reason to fear that popular synods and assemblies of the Presbyterian sort might be less readily subjected to state control than were the bishops. The Scottish Kirk was a dread example! They had

<sup>8</sup> Mitchell (*Westminster Ass.* p. 165) gives an account of one of the climaxes of this debate, quoting from Baillie's *Letters and Journals*, vol. ii. p. 145: "On the 20th of February, 1644, there being very fair appearances of agreement in the matters disputed between the two parties, after long and keen debates, Mr. Nye [the leading Puritan debater] interfered to 'spoil all their play,' and offered to prove their favorite church government 'inconsistent with a civil state;' and again on the following day when 'seeing the Assembly full of the prime nobles and chief members of both Houses, he did fall on that argument again and offered to demonstrate that their way of drawing a whole kingdom under one national Assembly was formidable, yea, thrice over pernicious to civil states and kingdoms.' It is hardly to be wondered that he should have been cried down and voted to have spoken against the order, or that the *perfervidum ingenium Scotorum* should have been roused, and even the calm and judicious Henderson should for the moment have so far given way to his exasperation as to compare him with Sanballat, Tobias, and Symmachus, who sought to stir up their heathen rulers against the Jews, or to the Pagan writers who stirred up the Roman Emperors against the Christians."



also good reason to be diffident about intrusting the uncontrolled power of excommunication to a national church which was founded upon Puritan principles. But upon this point the Presbyterians could not yield, and though this was the most melancholy period of the Assembly, and outwardly the most ignominious, one cannot but admire the resolution with which they stuck to their colors, even when they saw that the end must be the frustration of all their hopes.

Erastianism was predominant in the Parliament, and it was also strongly represented in the Assembly. It was essentially a Reformed principle, and it was no mere accident that it took its name from a member of the Reformed Church at Heidelberg, — though it was answered by Beza as the representative of the traditions of Geneva. Erastus' position was only possible on the basis of Zwingli's and Calvin's theory, which *contrasted* the functions of teaching and discipline; and on this basis it was logically legitimate. He only asserted the common Reformed principle in maintaining that the pastoral office is merely persuasive, that the pastor may set forth the conditions of worthily partaking the sacrament, and may even *warn* the unworthy, though he can *exclude* no one. This power — the whole power of discipline — the Reformed theory allotted to lay representatives of the people, the ruling elders. But why, said Erastus, is it not more convenient and more in harmony with the Old Testament to account the *ordinary popular representatives*, the civil magistrates of the Christian state, the proper organs of this function? Why not?<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> To explain the uncompromising stand which the English Presbyterians took upon this point it needs to be noted that the Scots had drifted away from the common Reformed position and were inclined to attribute



The protracted negotiations on the subject of autonomy were suspended for a long season by a set of "Queries" — most ingeniously calculated to annoy — which the Parliament proposed to the Assembly. I quote these questions in full because they touch so acutely the weak spot in the Assembly, namely, the Dissenters' maintenance of the *divine right* of Presbyterian government in all its details.

"Whereas it is resolved by the House of Commons, that all persons guilty of notorious and scandalous offences shall be suspended from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: The House of Commons desires to be satisfied by the Assembly of Divines in these Questions following:

"I. Whether the Parochial and Congregational Elderships appointed by the Ordinance of Parliament, or any other Congregational or Presbyterian Elderships, are *Jure divino* and of the will and appointment of Jesus Christ, and whether any particular church-government be *jure divino*; and what that government is?

"II. Whether all the members of the said Elderships, as members thereof, or which of them, are *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

"III. Whether the superior Assemblies or Elderships, viz. the Classical, Provincial, and National, whether all or any of them are *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

"IV. Whether appeals from Congregational Elderships to the Classical, Provincial, and National Assemblies, or to any of them, and to which of them, are *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ; and are their powers upon

to the pastoral office a definite power of government — though only as it was associated with the eldership. Hence it is, too, that the Assembly did not require a *plurality* of elders in a congregation. One was sufficient, if he give his whole time to the work; and in that case it is assumed that he shall receive a pecuniary support. The Scots were not quite clear whether the elder was a layman or not. Surely the difference is an unsubstantial one!

such appeals *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“ V. Whether Oecumenical Assemblies are *jure divino*; and whether there be appeals from any of the former Assemblies to the said Oecumenical *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“ VI. Whether by the Word of God the power of judging and declaring what are such notorious and scandalous offences for which persons guilty thereof are to be kept from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, and of conventing before them, trying, and actually suspending from the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper such offenders accordingly, is either in the Congregational Eldership or presbytery, or in any other Eldership, Congregation, or Persons; and whether such powers are in them only, or in any of them, and in which of them, *jure divino* and by the will and appointment of Jesus Christ?

“ VII. Whether there be any certain and particular rules expressed in the Word of God to direct the Elderships or Presbyteries, Congregations or Persons, or any of them, in the exercise and execution of the powers aforesaid; and what are these rules?

“ VIII. Is there anything contained in the Word of God, that the supreme Magistracy in a Christian State may not judge what are the aforesaid notorious and scandalous offences, and the manner of suspension for the same: and in what particulars concerning the premises is the said supreme Magistracy by the Word of God excluded?

“ IX. Whether the provision of Commissioners to judge of scandals not enumerated (as they are authorised by the Ordinance of Parliament) be contrary to that way of government which Christ hath appointed in His Church, and wherein are they so contrary?

“ In answer to these particulars, the House of Commons desires of the Assembly of Divines their proofs from Scripture; and to set down the several texts of Scripture in the express words of the same. It is *Ordered* that every particular minister of the Assembly of Divines, that is or shall be at the debate of any of these Questions, do, upon every Resolution which shall be presented to this House concerning the

same, subscribe his respective name, either with the affirmative or negative, as he gives his vote: And that those that do dissent from the major part shall set down their positive opinions, with the express texts of Scripture upon which their opinions are grounded!" *Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. IV. pp. 519 sq.

Is it too severe to say that the Assembly deserved this treatment? They had certainly laid themselves fairly open to the attack; but one would hardly expect that the Puritan Parliament would be so soon baiting the Presbyterians with the self-same principle that they had wielded triumphantly against Prelacy. Disingenuous as was this petition for enlightenment, the Divines soberly set to work to comply with it. What mass of proof-texts they collected we shall never know, though they labored for eight weeks — before they gave it up. Fortunately a reply was not required of them. A change in the political situation restored better relations between the House and the Assembly; the Commons withdrew their offensive "Commission;" the Divines returned chastened in spirit to seek some accommodation in the matter of Church government; and the Scottish Commissioners took themselves off rather than have a part in such weakness. The accommodation ultimately arrived at was a decision to tolerate Independent dissent.

The Questions of the House of Commons have never been answered — because they never could be. But those are not the only hard questions that might be asked. Others *have* been asked, and in their answers is given the history of English sectarianism. I do not ignore the singular religious forces which have been the life — to a large extent the common life — of the great Protestant denominations of England and America; but

what has made them *separate* as well as alive is the crude application of this same narrow principle, that nothing is legal in the Church which cannot be proved by Scripture. Monarchical episcopacy has no warrant in Scripture—hence we have Presbyterianism. But presbyteries and ruling elders are just as little warranted by Scripture—hence Independency. One great branch of the Independents discovered that there is no clear instance in Scripture of the baptism of infants or of any other mode of baptism but immersion—and so we have the Baptists. Fresh-Water Baptists found no Scriptural instance of baptism except in running water. Seventh Day Baptists could find no express warrant for the abrogation of the Sabbath or for its transference to the first day of the week. Presbyterian sects have been formed by an inversion of this process: the rigorous members have not advanced beyond their brethren, but have been left behind in the march of progress—some, because they could find no warrant in Scripture for singing other hymns than those of David; others, because, in spite of David's harp, they could find no warrant for instrumental music. One sect made a discovery altogether out of line with these: they discovered, namely, that there is no suggestion in Scripture of a legally constituted ministry, and that the only warrant of a *jure divino* claim is the gift of the Holy Ghost. These so-called Quakers or Friends noticed what all the other sects had ignored; namely, the importance of the prophetic office in the early Church,—though they in turn were equally one-sided in denying that it was an *office*, or even that there were any regularly constituted offices in the Church.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Another office, or rather function, which was overlooked was that of healing. The recognition of this has led to the formation of new



The numerous controversial works which were written in the seventeenth century to prove this or that particular form of government from Scripture are utterly without importance for our modern historical study of the subject of early Christian organization, for they rest upon no clear picture of the Apostolic Age — the materials for which were indeed lacking. The same may be

enthusiastic sects. The adherents of the Faith Cure do not usually constitute themselves a separate sect; for their principle can hardly be repudiated by any Christian denomination, and the issue is properly drawn on the question of *fact*. The so-called Christian Science, which is often vulgarly confounded with this, is — so far as it is not mere chicanery — a radically anti-Christian philosophy. But there is one small though interesting sect which was the immediate outcome of the modern instances of faith healing, namely, the Irvingite, or, as it is self-styled, the Catholic Apostolic Church. These people retain all the offices that ever were in the early Church, and they boast of “angels” besides. But they have as purely spiritual an idea of their elaborately organized official ministry and of its functions as the Quakers have of their unofficial. It is a ministry which is constituted by prophecy, and in its higher offices it enjoys prophetic and other miraculous gifts. The Protestant sects have no place in their philosophy for such ideas — hence this revolt against a non-prophetic ministry which has no divine gifts and exercises only the legal authority which is devolved upon it by the congregation. On the other hand the Catholic Church retains these primitive ideas, — though in so far as they are expressed in its organization they are transformed or catholicized. The gift of healing belongs properly to the office of the exorcist, though it is also exercised unofficially by holy persons. The ideal of unofficial gifts of prophecy is still cherished, and the function is recognized in the official *charisma veritatis* of the bishop, or in what has now superseded it, the infallibility of the pope. It is often remarked that in America the Quakers who leave their now decadent sect usually join the Episcopal Church. This is commonly regarded as an instance of the human tendency to fly from one extreme to another; but in reality it is because the Quaker finds there an idea of the Church and of the ministry which is nearest akin to his own — namely, the Catholic idea, which survives as the tenet of an important school within the Anglican Church. If the Quaker must accept an official ministry he is inclined to accept only one which lays claim to spiritual gifts. The transition he makes is pretty nearly that which was universally made in passing from Primitive to Catholic Christianity: instead of a direct, unofficial and personal gift, he recognizes one which is officially conferred in ordination.



said of the controversial works which since then have appeared with ever decreasing frequency. It is remarkable how narrow the ground of controversy remains, and how slavishly one author after another repeats the traditional arguments, — except as the Biblical claims are gradually dropped in favor of a utilitarian apology for the existing order. As the hope vanishes of establishing an ecclesiastical polity out of the very words of Scripture, the historic claims of the episcopal organization — once so half-heartedly asserted and so confidently denied — loom up into greater importance, and appear not only satisfying to those that are within the Anglican Church but imposing to those that are without. For here is an organization of which we have a perfectly clear historic picture, and which we can trace back by unimpeachable evidence almost to the limits of the Apostolic Age, leaving fair room for the popular presumption that its unknown origin may lie within them. The Anglican disputants have indeed done some service in keeping alive an interest in early Church history and prompting a critical valuation of its literature, — leading especially to the vindication of the Ignatian epistles. But the rest of all this long controversy over the Biblical form of Church government has been entirely without scientific result. We cannot even solace ourselves with the poor compensation which the most recent French writer<sup>11</sup> on this subject suggests to us, that “it is to the stimulus of these confessional passions, ecclesiastical history owes the honor of being for many *une admirable école de critique et d’érudition.*”

<sup>11</sup> Réville, *Les Origines de l’Épiscopat*, 1894, p. 8.

## § 6, MODERN STUDY OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

This denominational controversy, so far from developing a sound historical criticism, seems rather to have smothered the spirit of investigation; for while the first stimulus and the most solid achievements in our modern historical study of early Church organization are due to Germany (where the form of the ministry has ever been accounted a matter of slight importance), the *Reformed Churches* — whether in the Continent, or in England, or in America — have made no important contribution to the subject. Modern study, for all the candor of its motive and the soundness of its method, has served rather to reveal the inherent difficulties of the subject than to dispose conclusively of its problems. Consequently there still reigns great diversity of opinion about the organization of the Church before the middle of the second century, albeit none of the opinions now held by scholars have much likeness to the views prescribed by denominational prejudice. Upon some points there is too little historical evidence to enable one to form a conclusive judgment, and in picturing the situation as a whole one necessarily relies upon a theory which cannot be expressly proved in all details, but must be justified by its internal coherency and by its agreement with all the well-ascertained facts. The next few pages, giving an account of the principal works on this subject, are designed especially to show upon what points a general agreement has been reached, and what are now the most important subjects of controversy.

The freedom from confessional prejudice which characterizes our modern study of Church organization was significantly showed in the first important work on

this subject, which, though it was by a Lutheran, was designed to prove the apostolic origin of the monarchical episcopate. Rothe was so much impressed by the universality of this order at an early date, and by the purpose which it had served in the history of the Church, that, while recognizing that it is not to be discovered in the communities which are reflected by the New Testament writings, he felt that its establishment must be referred to a council of the apostles meeting about the year 70. He felt strongly the necessity of an objective bond of unity, which he found in the first age in the apostolic *college*, and afterwards in the bishops. But for all this, he does not account the episcopal order essential for the Church, nor suppose that it was expressly ordained by the apostles to endure in perpetuity.<sup>1</sup>

Baur<sup>2</sup> promptly and convincingly opposed this theory,

<sup>1</sup> Rothe, *Die Anfänge der christlichen Kirche und ihre Verfassung*, 1837. Though Rothe's main thesis has found no other adherents, his work as a whole has proved highly stimulating, and many of his observations are of lasting value. In endeavoring to trace the development of Catholicism from primitive Christianity, Rothe was not influenced, as most students since Ritschl have been, by the tendency to contrast the two phases too sharply. On the contrary, he ever seeks the common term which unites them, and for this the last section of his book, which discusses the development of the Idea of the Church (confessedly under the influence of Möhler's *Einheit in der Kirche*), is peculiarly worthy of attention.

<sup>2</sup> F. C. Baur, *Ueber den Ursprung des Episcopats*, 1838. In this as in so many other respects Baur's criticism has rendered valuable service, though in its direct purpose it was vitiated by the Hegelian notion of development, or more particularly by the so-called Tübingen hypothesis of a radical opposition between the Jewish and Pauline forms of Christianity. His suggestion that the necessity of opposing a strong defence against the Gnostic heresies accounts for the concentration of power in the hands of the single bishop has been accepted by all subsequent historians. Given the single bishop, all is fairly clear; but, with the failure of Baur's theory which is stated above in the text, it is by no means so clear how the *several* bishops were eliminated to make way for the *one*. This is the problem which has never yet been cleared up, and perhaps never will be.

though that which he set up in its stead was even less tenable. Like Rothe, he recognized the monarchical episcopate as the great problem of the history of Church organization. This is the problem which has continued to engross the attention of students, but with less hope than ever of finding a complete solution, since there is no evidence which throws direct light upon the time and occasion of the origin of the *single* bishop. Baur's theory was the most apt of any to explain the problem, but it was at variance in several respects with the only historic records we have of the Apostolic Age. He supposed that the monarchical principle was in a certain sense aboriginal in the Church, the power of government being lodged in the hands of a *single* presbyter in each congregation or meeting, — of which there might be several in a city. It was natural that to one of the presbyters in each city there should be accorded certain rights of presidency and leadership; and the exigency of defence against the Gnostic heresies tended to centralize the powers of government in his hands. This gives us at once the diocesan episcopacy of the third century (a rule extending over separate congregations); but it ignores the fact that the earliest form of episcopacy we know, is a parochial episcopacy, with bishop and presbyters ruling conjointly the same congregation; and it is only by a forced interpretation of New Testament texts that the later form of congregational government by a single presbyter can be imported into the Apostolic Age. Baur himself was ultimately forced to give up his interpretation of Tit. 1: 5 (*κατὰ πόλιν πρεσβυτέρους*) in the sense of "one presbyter in each city."

Next followed the important work of Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche* (2nd



ed. 1857), which criticised both Rothe and Baur, and advanced a new theory of the development of Christian institutions which has dominated most of the subsequent study. Ritschl saw a peculiarly Jewish notion of the episcopate exemplified in the rule of James, and afterwards of Simeon, at Jerusalem,—both being blood-relatives of the Lord. He considers this analogous to the government of Islam by the family of Mahomet. So far as the *idea* is concerned—namely, that the bishop is to be regarded as the representative of Christ—he finds the same thing illustrated at Alexandria, and in the Clementine writings. As the representative of Christ, it is evident that the bishop must exercise not merely a parochial but an ecumenical authority, and such was clearly the authority of James. This notion is by no means generally received, but it is really fundamental to Ritschl's theory, for it leaves him free to regard the Catholic episcopate—which according to him originated in Asia Minor and subsequently spread to Rome and the West—as exclusively the product of Greek influences. This, the ultimately triumphant type of episcopate, was not ecumenical, but merely local in character; not representative of Christ, but of the apostles. Without denying the peculiarity of the government of the Church at Jerusalem, it may be affirmed that the contrast here drawn between two types of the episcopate is not justified. Ignatius himself regarded the bishop as the representative of the Lord, whereas the presbyters represented the apostles. And corresponding to this, as we shall see later, the Catholic bishop enjoyed from the beginning an ecumenical authority, because the Christian assembly in which he ruled was regarded not merely as a local branch of the Church, but as *the*



Church. As Ritschl's work has largely determined the subsequent course of this study, other prominent ideas which are due to him will be noticed below in summing up the latest opinions.

The first candid study of this subject which appeared in English we owe to Bishop Lightfoot, — *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry* appended to his *Commentary on Philippians* (1868). The candor of this work, as well as the learning and authority of the author, has given it a great influence both within and without the Anglican Church, and it probably represents to-day the most generally received opinion in England and America. It has been hailed by Congregationalists and Presbyterians as a vindication of their respective claims, and even the strenuous supporters of *jure divino* episcopacy have practically adopted its premises, though they build a different theory upon them (see above, note A). The fundamental theme of Lightfoot's Dissertation was the original identity of the names presbyter and bishop, which, as we have seen, played so large a part in the earlier English controversy, and which was still accepted in his time by most Continental scholars. The name and office of presbyter was derived from the Synagogue, while the name bishop was used exclusively in Greek communities. On p. 196 his position is briefly summed up in two sentences: "It is not therefore to the apostle that we must look for the prototype of the bishop." "The episcopate was formed not out of the apostolic order by localization but out of the presbyteral by elevation: and the title, which was originally common to all, came at length to be appropriated to the chief among them." This development of a monarchical episcopacy in place of the earlier presbyterian government is explained (as by Rothe and Ritschl) by the practical ne-

cessity for a centralized government to defeat the various tendencies which threatened the Church with division. It was the East which was most inclined to a monarchical form of government, and consequently it was in the vigorous Churches of Asia Minor (and Syria) that the episcopate had its rise, extending only gradually to the democratically inclined communities of Greece and Italy.

But though this notion of the development of the episcopate out of the presbyterate was the fundamental part of Lightfoot's theory, it was not *all* of it, nor even the most characteristic part. This was merely the traditional assumption, with which no scholar was then able to break. The distinctive feature of his work is the rehabilitation of Rothe's theory, which presumes the necessity of apostolic sanction for so important and so early a change in Church organization. It is only upon the supposition that this most distinctive feature of his argument has been generally ignored, that we can explain the disappointment which Lightfoot's work occasioned among the Anglican rigorists, or the satisfaction with which it was welcomed by their opponents. One cannot fairly regard the Preface to the sixth edition of the Commentary (1881) as a *retraction*. The work may justly claim to be "a confirmation of the statement in the English Ordinal," and no such plausible argument has ever been made in proof of the apostolic sanction of the episcopal order. Putting aside what was manifestly untenable in Rothe's hypothesis, Lightfoot traces the episcopate historically almost as far back as the end of the first century in Syria and Asia Minor. Pressing the presumption that it originated there, it wants but little to persuade us that it was due to the early example of St. James, and the later example — and perhaps the express ordinance — of St. John.

The theory, however, requires of us too many assumptions. The gap between the Ignatian letters and the death of St. John may seem a small one, but it is too great to be bridged over by an assumption: we have reason to place the origin of monarchical episcopacy rather within than before that interval. Add to this the vagueness of our information about the activity of St. John in Asia Minor, and the argument appears doubly weak. But more important than this is the fact that all the late evidence adduced in favor of it does not suffice to prove that episcopacy had its origin in Asia Minor. On the contrary, the belief has lately been gaining ground that in this as in almost all other innovations of Church government Rome furnished the authoritative pattern. Lightfoot himself says that "the reason for supposing Clement to have been a bishop is as strong as the universal tradition of the next age can make it." However this may be, the recognition that the offices of bishop and presbyter were originally distinct gives the question now a wholly new aspect.

While Ritschl accounted for the development of Catholicism — and the Catholic episcopate among other things — by the influence of Greek *thought* upon Christianity, Renan referred more definitely to Greek and Roman *institutions* as the pattern by which we have to explain the organization of the Church.<sup>3</sup> This line of inquiry has of late been followed with more or less general favor, as it is applied to any or all of the institutions of the Church. This was the favorite theme of the late Professor Hatch, and as applied to the matter of our present study he exploited his idea in the most extreme, not to say extravagant, form in his *Organiza-*

<sup>3</sup> Particularly in *Les Apôtres* and *L'Église chrétienne*.

*tion of the Early Christian Churches*, 4th ed. 1892 (being the Bampton Lectures for 1880).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Hatch's work was translated by Harnack (who prefaced it with a valuable dissertation) under the title, *Die Gesellschaftsverfassung der christlichen Kirchen im Altertum*, 1883. Hatch applied the same theory with the same extravagance to the Eucharist and most of the other usages of the Church, in his later work, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*, 4th ed. 1892 (being the Hibbert Lectures for 1888). So far as can be judged from our own scanty literature on this subject, Hatch's theory of the organization of the Church has met with more general favor in England and America than on the Continent. In translating the work, Harnack himself suggested important modifications, and has since then changed his own view in several respects. Harnack differs especially in regard to the character of the presbyters, and his views on this subject can be conveniently consulted in his article *Presbyter* in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Harnack's view is more fully stated in his *Prolegomena* to the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, *Texte und Untersuchungen*, II. 1 & 2 (1884); also in his exceedingly valuable work, *Die Quellen der sogenannten apostolischen Kirchenordnung*, in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, II. 5 (1886). In this latter work Harnack made the brilliant critical discovery of two sources (which he names A and B) belonging approximately to the middle of the second century and underlying the so-called *Apostolic Church Order* of the end of the third. They are of the highest importance for the history of Church organization, and I shall have frequent occasion to refer to them. Harnack accompanies this with a dissertation on the office of lector. It is convenient to notice here the discussion of Church organization by Hans Achelis, on the basis of the Canons of Hippolytus, — *Texte und Untersuchungen*, VI. 4 (1891). Harnack seems to be diffident about referring these canons to Hippolytus or even to Rome, — as Achelis unhesitatingly does, — *Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, first part, pp. 643 sq. But they are now generally referred to about the year 200 (barring interpolations and the defects of an exceedingly indirect transmission), and ascribed to Rome — though this with somewhat more reserve. I am convinced that the date at least is approximately correct, and on this supposition they constitute one of the most important documents for the history of Church organization. On the other hand Funk (*Die apostolischen Konstitutionen*, 1891, p. 275) places them *after* the Apostolical Constitutions — that is, according to him, later than A. D. 500 — and is inclined to ascribe them to the East rather than to the West. — See also Harnack's article on church organization in *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 1889, pp. 417-429. In *The Expositor*, Third Series, vol. V., Jan.-June, 1887, there is a series of interesting articles, by Sanday, Harnack, and Gore, on the same subject.



The following is a sketch of the characteristic points of Hatch's theory: The fact that the early converts to Christianity gradually (!) learned to combine together, he explains by the "general tendency in the early centuries of the Christian era towards the formation of associations, and especially of religious associations"! Hence the resemblance of the Christian Churches to the various pagan clubs or confraternities may be taken for granted—it is remarked that "outward observers sometimes placed them in the same category"—and the only question that arises is, "What, *qua* associations, was their point of difference?" The answer is, The predominance of the philanthropic aim in the churches. Both the name and function of the bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) were borrowed from the Greek guilds,—in many of which, as mutual benefit societies, the economic aspect was as important as it was in the churches. The chief economic officer in each local Christian society was the bishop. Essentially he was the steward or administrator of the Church property: to him as president (particularly in connection with the Eucharist) the alms of the people were brought; and by him they were distributed, with the help of the deacons, who were his ministers in this work. To this function, so important in the early Church, the bishop owed his peculiar power and position in the local community; and with such a start as this it is not to be wondered that he gradually acquired authority over the spiritual functions which had formerly belonged to apostles, prophets, and teachers.

The presbyters or elders are sharply contrasted with the bishops: they are *disciplinary* officers of the local societies. This office is to be explained in general by the respect due to seniority; but the particular form which it assumed in the Christian Churches was due (so



far at least as Gentile communities are concerned) to imitation of the senate or council which was universal in Roman municipalities and associations. The *name*, however, was borrowed from the similar office established in the Jewish-Christian Churches, which in its turn was copied from the "synedrion" or local court of the dispersed Jewish communities. From this it is evident that both bishops and presbyters (and deacons) were essentially *local* officers; and even in the local community they exercised no spiritual office, no ministry of the word, no cure of souls in the proper sense. Why a plurality of bishops was originally needed for this function, or how the single bishop came ultimately to supersede them, the theory does not explain. For this, the fundamental problem, Hatch has no new clue, and can only repeat the old arguments.

Hosts of presumptions rise against this theory, and it needs strong proof to withstand them. The theory is weakest, however, where it most needs to be strong, for it cannot be proved that the officers of pagan guilds were commonly called *ἐπίσκοποι* — on the contrary, it seems to have been an exceedingly rare name in this connection. Harnack makes a much needed amendment in recognizing the teaching function of the presbyter, and in emphasizing the consideration which the bishop enjoyed as chief officer of the *cultus* — particularly of the Eucharist — in the absence of the more expressly spiritual ministry (the apostles, prophets, and teachers) who were itinerant, or at least by the very nature of their office could not be confined to the local society. He adverts also to the fact that most of the guilds had a religious basis in some particular cult which they fostered. The original function of the bishop is thus not so totally incommensurate with his subsequent

powers. But the prime objection still stands, that the Christians held the pagan guilds in peculiar abhorrence, just because of their religious associations.<sup>5</sup> Most of the Continental scholars who still hold this theory suppose only an *unconscious* imitation, an unreflecting inclination to follow the popular trend of the age.<sup>6</sup>

But on the other hand, those who are inclined to rail against Hatch's theory will do well to reflect how little difference there is between it and the view so long current in England, to the effect that the primitive organization of the Churches was copied from that of the synagogues. The learned work of Vitringa, *De Synagoga Vetere* (1st ed. 1696, 2nd ed. 1726), is the basis of

<sup>5</sup> The unreasonableness of supposing a direct or conscious imitation by the Church of the Greek *thiasi* (religious guilds) or of the mysteries is very well showed by Cheetham, *The Mysteries, Pagan and Christian*, 1897, — though the author is especially contending against Hatch's application of the theory to the province of Christian worship.

<sup>6</sup> It was De Rossi that first gave the impulse to this whole trend of argument, in *Roma sotterranea*, vol. I. (1864), pp. 101 sqq., vol. III. pp. 507 sqq. But he is in no wise responsible for the extravagant conclusions to which his hint has led. His purpose was to explain, not the internal organization of the Christian Churches, but their *legal status* in relation to the State. Though Christianity was an illicit religion, the Churches did hold property — in particular the vast cemeteries at Rome which it is De Rossi's chief glory to have discovered. It is perfectly true, as Hatch says, and it is perfectly natural, that *outward observers* sometimes placed the Christian societies and the heathen guilds in the same category; and it is a plausible suggestion that the Church at Rome, for instance, was recognized by the State as a burial society — the only sort of guild which the Roman law permitted after the early part of the second century. In my *Monuments of the Early Church* (1901), pp. 53 sqq. I have stated De Rossi's theory at length, my purpose being to present the points of view which are most prominent to-day in the study of Christian archaeology. But over against this (p. 61) I set some very significant words of Duchesne's (from a work intended for private circulation, *Les Origines chrétiennes*, c. xxiii. § 4), which point out upon how slight a basis the theory rests, and how great improbabilities it suggests. For a more fundamental criticism of the theory see Sohm, n. 22 to p. 75, — or as I have reproduced his argument below in c. iv., n. H.

this view, which is still popular as an explanation of the presbyterate. But, after all, the Synagogue was a product of Hellenic influence, as its name suggests; and the question at issue as between these two views is merely whether the Church borrowed its organization from the Greeks at second or at first hand. Both views assume that the organization of the Church was expressly a legal one, and neither of them gives a divinely sanctioned form of Church government.

Schürer's admirable study of Jewish organization<sup>7</sup> has disposed of the idea that the Synagogue could have furnished the pattern of Church government. This is now all but universally acknowledged, so far as the general scheme of organization is concerned, and the deacon's office in particular is no longer referred to this source. But the analogy between the Christian and Jewish presbyter is still maintained by some, though it is evidently inconsistent with a lofty idea of the Christian presbyterate, since the Jewish presbyters were rather civil than religious officers, dealing with discipline and not with worship.

The notion which so long persisted of the original identity of presbyters and bishops is now finally discredited. This is the chief service of Hatch's book.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Schürer, *Gesch. des jüd. Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, 2nd ed. 1886, vol. 2, pp. 356 sqq., 513 sqq. — Eng. ed. 1890, div. II., vol. II., pp. 51–68, 243 sqq. Schürer is the first to give us an accurate knowledge of the organization of the Jewish communities in Palestine and in the dispersion.

<sup>8</sup> The theory that bishop and presbyter are but two titles for the same office agrees very well with the passage in the 20th chapter of the Acts (vv. 17, 28), and it raises no difficulty in the few other cases where the *ἐπίσκοπος* is mentioned in the New Testament—Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7. But it cannot be said to explain the whole situation as it is presented to us even in the Scriptures, and it is inconsistent with some of the earliest extra-canonical authorities. It is interesting to observe in what different ways scholars are trying to do justice to the facts which are

In ascribing the episcopal office exclusively to the Gentile Churches and to the example of pagan guilds, Hatch also did much to break the general consensus of English opinion which ascribed the *whole* organization to the pattern of the Synagogue. But his own theory is fast yielding to the recognition that the organization of both Gentile and Jewish-Christian Churches was substantially the same, *and that this organization was the unique and spontaneous creation of the Christian faith.*<sup>9</sup>

here recognized. The late Dr. Hort, in his last course of lectures, published posthumously under the title *The Christian Ecclesia* (1900), explains the word *ἐπίσκοπος*, wherever it occurs in the New Testament and in 1 Clement, as a descriptive and unofficial designation, applied to the office of presbyter, but not preëmpted by it, so that it remained, so to speak, no man's property until it was appropriated by the bishop properly so called. On the other hand Sohm regards the term presbyter as the unofficial title, which more especially indicated a class of notables in the Church (the aged or experienced members—who were not, however, definitely appointed officers), but might be employed too, as a title of honor, for bishops, teachers, and apostles.

<sup>9</sup> On this point especially cf. Weizsäcker, *Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche*, 2nd ed. pp. 546 and 618 sq. In *The Expositor*, vol. V. (1887), pp. 338, 339, Harnack denies that the Christian bishops and deacons had any relation to Jewish organization on the one hand, or to pagan civic or collegial organization on the other. See also Kühl, *Die Gemeindeordnung in den Pastoralbriefen*, 1885. Löning, *Die Gemeindeverfassung des Urchristentums*, 1889, pp. 20 sq. gives the ablest criticism of Hatch's theory of the relation of the episcopate to the Greek guilds,—though he himself clings (like Holtzman, *Die Pastoralbriefe*, 1880) to the notion that the presbyter was copied after the Jewish prototype. The modern German literature on the subject of Church government is exceedingly voluminous. An excellent, though not altogether impartial, account of the latest theories is given by Schmiedel, art. *Ministry* in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, together with an acute criticism of the views of Harnack and Hatch. Loofs' vigorous criticism of Harnack's theory (cf. *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1890, pp. 619–658) does not bear against the modification of that theory as presented by Sohm. Our English literature is scanty. Besides the important works of Lightfoot, Gore, and Wordsworth, already commented upon, I would mention Cunningham, *The Growth of the Church in its Organization and Institutions*, Edinburgh, 1886; and Allen, *Christian Institutions*, 1897, which substantially reproduces the views of Harnack and Hatch. More briefly, Rainy, *The Ancient Catholic Church*, 1902; and



Nevertheless the opinion still prevails that the organization of the primitive Christian Church, however original it was in form, was essentially not different in *kind* from any other secular organization — be it a Roman *collegium* or a modern club. That is to say, it was a *corporation* including a definite circle of persons who by its constitution were empowered to take common action within the scope of the society, enacting legislation, or exercising administration and discipline. That this was *originally* the character of Church organization — as it is to-day — has been taken for granted in all discussions of the subject. Yet this is in fact the question upon which all else hangs. Before discussing

McGiffert, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, 1897; — the last three in the International Theological Library. There is still less written on this subject in French: Réville, *Les Origines de L'Épiscopat*, 1894, is the latest work with which I am acquainted. This author applies the canons of historical criticism with such exaggerated severity that he defeats their object. He is so scrupulous to observe the caution which difference in age or locality imposes upon our investigation of various historical documents, that he excogitates as many Church politics as there are groups of documents (according to his criticism) within the New Testament — which is simply to abandon all hope of reaching a coherent solution of the problem. Hatch, too, has made a great display of the methods of historical study. I shall let that suffice, and add nothing of my own on this subject; for I suppose that educated persons are nowadays perfectly familiar with the canons of historical investigation. It is quite another matter to apply them. The difficulties in this particular study are not peculiar in kind. But it may be well to remark that the common divergency of opinion about the date or authorship of the various documents (New Testament and other) upon which we have to depend, is not of such vital moment to our study as might be supposed. For my own part I attach great weight to the general historical reliability of the Acts of the Apostles, and I am inclined to ascribe the Pastoral Epistles to St. Paul; but so long as they are both regarded as documents of the first century the results of our investigation are not materially affected. No theory will generally commend itself which does not tally substantially with these documents; and, on any view of their authority, the best proof of any theory is in the fact that it harmonizes with the Scriptural accounts.



whether the government of the early Church was monarchical, or representative, or democratic, we need to raise the inquiry whether it was at all an organization in *legal terms*, or whether it was not rather in its nature incommensurable with civil or other forms of secular government with which it is compared. All other questions about Church government have been hotly disputed: this fundamental point has simply been assumed, because it is on all sides taken for granted that without legal organization no well ordered society can exist.

The correct view of early Christian organization was first suggested by the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, or more particularly by Harnack's brilliant study of this recently discovered document. It was evident that the chief officers as there described — apostles, prophets, and teachers — could have no place in a legally organized scheme. What constituted their office, what proved their authority, was nothing else than the possession of a personal *charisma* (a spiritual gift); which they exercised by virtue of divine right, not of any human law; which they had received "not of men, neither by man;" and which they employed for the benefit of the whole Church, not of a mere local congregation. The *whole* Church, it is evident, was charismatically organized, not legally. A charismatic organization of human society is therefore conceivable; and if the whole Church might be organized in this wise, there is no good reason why every local society of Christians might not also be. But before this last conclusion Harnack arbitrarily stopped, drawing a sharp line of demarcation between the charismatic offices (the ministry of the word *par excellence*), which belonged to the *Church*, and the administrative offices (including the leaders of the cultus), which be-

longed exclusively to the *local congregation*. This is the notion which has since broadly prevailed, and which constitutes the basis of Hatch's theory. The local organization (of bishops, deacons, and presbyters), if it is not pneumatic (charismatic), can only be conceived as legal. And *vice versa*, if these offices repose solely upon a legal constitution, they are of necessity local, they have no valid exercise outside the corporation: they constitute a congregational government, but are no part of *Church* government—for, confessedly, the Church was *not* legally organized.

I have here stated the various views upon the problems of Church government which were prevalent before Sohm's work appeared. Sohm's trenchant argument cuts deeper than these theories. He recognizes that in the Church, the body of Christ, *there can be no other than a spiritual government*, no authority but the word of God, and no authoritative office which does not rest primarily upon the ministry of the word. In the second place, the unit of the Church is not the congregation, but the individual believer with his personal charisma. The Church is not the mathematical sum of the Churches, nor is it in any wise to be measured *extensively*: wherever disciples are gathered together (though they be but two or three), there is the Church—and in a sense it is the whole Church, for it lacks nothing to its completeness, since Christ is in the midst of it. Therefore, thirdly, the so-called congregational government is in reality Church government; it, too, demands a charismatic ministry, a ministry of the word, and it can endure no other. The administration of Church property (God's property), the exercise of discipline, and the conduct of worship belong to the min-

ister of the word as such. There is no legal corporate form for the body of Christ, but only such corporate reality as the Scriptural figure indicates. In the fourth place, as there is no such thing as congregational government, but only Church government, there is no authority which is merely local:—all authority in the Church is ecumenical, because it rests upon the possession and exercise of God's word. The bishop, for instance, was no mere administrative officer—he was that because he was essentially and originally a minister of the word, and he therefore exercised from the first a more than local, namely, an ecumenical authority. In the Church there can be no human sovereignty—either monarchical or democratic; for the only law in the Church is God's will, which is made known through apostles, prophets, and teachers; while the people have only to discern and accept.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Sohm, § 1.

## CHAPTER II

### THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

#### § 7, SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME ECCLESIA

THE word Church (the same as the Scotch *Kirk* and the German *Kirche*) is our uniform translation for the New Testament ἐκκλησία. It is a word, however, which by reason of its derivation, as well as on account of the associations which have gathered about it in the course of the Christian centuries, does not convey to us exclusively or precisely the Scriptural notion. It commonly signifies the *house* of worship, as does the Latin word *ecclesia* (a mere transliteration of the Greek), with its Romance derivatives, *église* and *chiesa*.<sup>1</sup> We are not

<sup>1</sup> Church (Scotch *Kirk*, German *Kirche*, Anglo-Saxon *Cyrice*) seems to be derived from the Greek *Kyrica*, transmitted perhaps through the Arian Goths — cf. s. v. *Kirche*, Grimm's *deutsches Wörterbuch*; also Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, lecture 6; Wedgwood, *Dict. of Engl. Etymology*, s. v. Church; and Skeat, *Etymological Dictionary*. As early as the fourth century *κυριακόν* was used for the Church building (the *Lord's house*), though the feminine form, from which our word seems to be directly derived, did not appear till later. The primary signification of the word was therefore the *house* of worship, and only in a secondary sense did it come to designate the congregation which gathered there. Hence our common use of the word Church is etymologically justified, and the Puritan attempt to limit it to the congregation (using "meeting-house" for the building) encountered so great an obstacle in the traditions of our language that it is not likely to be made again. We have to recognize, however, that our English word does not accurately render the New Testament idea, and for the purposes of careful study we must purge it of some of its most familiar associations. For this reason Hort (*The Christian Ecclesia*) prefers the Latin word *ecclesia*. This word is, indeed, colorless to us, but only because it is strange.

much accustomed to speak of the congregation itself as the Church; and if the word is so used at all, it refers to the congregation in its organized capacity, as a legal corporation. Even among scholars there is a tendency to contrast the Church, either as the empirical or as the ideal whole, with the individual congregations, the parochial units which compose the whole. But in thus using the word we must recognize that it is no longer equivalent to the New Testament ἐκκλησία, which, as we shall see, signifies expressly the congregation, whether it be great or small, whether it be conceived of as an empirical or as an ideal entity. It is significant that the New Testament has no expression for the distinction between the whole and the part which is aimed at in our use of the words Church and congregation.

In Classical Greek the word ἐκκλησία denoted exclusively the popular assembly of free citizens in a democratic state formally summoned by the herald for the exercise of government. In the post-Classical period it was used for *any* assembly of the people, for a festal or even a tumultuous assembly (as in Acts 19:32-41); but still only for a *popular* assembly, and so not for the

As a matter of fact, the Latin word with its Romance derivatives, and the Greek word itself, though they passed through a course of development the very opposite of that which our word church has followed, have acquired the same associations: denoting originally the congregation, they came to be applied secondarily to the house of worship. Altogether our common English word is to be preferred even in learned discussion, not only because it is vain to resist the force of usage, but chiefly because the name Church is already so rich in religious associations that it imports more to define and elevate its meaning than to invent another term in its place. Luther translated the New Testament term by what is undoubtedly its nearest equivalent, "Gemeinde,"—instead of the "blinden, undeutlichen" word Kirche, which in his translation of the Old Testament he used for idolatrous temples. This usage has not prevailed even in Germany, and although it had at first an influence upon the English translations of the Scripture it is altogether strange to us now. Hort (*op. cit.* p. 2) says: "'Congregation' was the only



governing assembly of a club or private corporation — except in an unusual sense.<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament idea of the *Ecclesia* is in substantial agreement with this, though it more directly reflects the use of the word in the Septuagint and in later Jewish parlance. *Ἐκκλησία* is the word which the Septuagint uses in the great majority of cases as the rendering for *קָהָל*. *Συναγωγή*, which occurs in the minority of instances for the above, is on the other hand the invariable rendering for *קָהָל*. These two Hebrew words are consistently distinguished in our Revised Version, the former being rendered by “assembly,” the latter by “congregation.” The slight difference which exists between these two words is accurately marked by this rendering: the latter word indicates rather the congregation as a whole, or the totality of the united people; the former denotes rather the congregation as it is called together in festal, religious assembly, or where stress is laid upon the relation of the people to their God. It would seem, however, that after the Exile the former word (*qāhāl*), which was ever the more definite and formal, came to combine the shades of meaning belonging to both; and thus *ἐκκλησία*, as its primary Greek equivalent, would naturally mean for Greek-speaking Jews the congregation of Israel quite as much as the *assembly* of the congregation.<sup>3</sup> At all events the New

rendering of *ἐκκλησία* in the English New Testament as it stood throughout Henry VIII.’s reign, the substitution of ‘church’ being due to the Genevan revisers, and it held its ground in the Bishops’ Bible in no less primary a passage than Matt. xvi. 18 till the Jacobean revision of 1611, which we call the Authorized Version.”

<sup>2</sup> See Sohm, p. 16, notes 2 and 3. In note 4 on the following page he disposes of Hatch’s claim that *ἐκκλησία* was ordinarily used for the assembly of a guild.

<sup>3</sup> See Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 3 sq., and Köstlin in *Herzogs Realencyklopädie*, art. *Kirche*.

Testament use of the word — particularly by St. Paul, who employs it most frequently — denotes not merely the congregation as it is publicly assembled, but the people of God as such. The notion of calling or summoning, which belongs to the *etymology* of both the Hebrew and the Greek word, was not prominent in the use of either. It is sometimes supposed that the Scriptural doctrine of election, the *calling out* from a larger body, was indicated in the word ἐκκλησία — from ἐκκαλέω; but the compound Greek verb has not this meaning, and even in the New Testament the noun does not appear to have been associated with this idea.

It may be surmised, however, that Jesus' choice of the word ἐκκλησία (and the subsequent New Testament use of it) was due to some of these less express connotations. Fundamentally it denoted the same thing as the "nation" or the "people" of God, but it was evidently more appropriate than either of these significant Old Testament names, to express the character of the people of the New Covenant, the true Israel of God, which was constituted not by race kindred, nor by nationality, but by God's individual choice and by man's immediate, personal relationship to him: — more concretely, by fulfilment of the conditions of Christian discipleship, that is, belief in Jesus and obedience to him. At the same time the social ideal was no less expressly emphasized in the word ecclesia (standing for both assembly and congregation) than in the words people or nation. The express meaning of the word and its Old Testament associations precluded a purely abstract conception of the Christian Ecclesia — like the "invisible Church" of the Protestant theologians — as the mere numerical totality of individual believers. It has already been remarked that the word was used to denote the body of

Christian disciples *as such*, and not merely as they were actually convened : but for all that, the Ecclesia was ever regarded as a social entity ; the divine call, individual as it was, was a call into a divinely constituted society, which was the sphere of Christian discipleship, in which the obligations of loving fellowship and service were to be realized. The spiritual bonds which united the disciples with one another were more real than any which were constituted by actual assembly in one place. And yet the actual assembly was essential to the practical realization of the ideal, and the notion of assembly belonged to the primary and proper sense of the word Ecclesia even in the New Testament. More than this, it is only in assembly — of two or three at the least — that the Ecclesia has the capacity to act (Matt. 18 : 17-20).

Important as is the social aspect of the Ecclesia upon the human side, on the divine side it is more essential still : the whole value, importance, and power of the Ecclesia (both in the Old Testament and in the New) is due to the fact that it is an assembly together *with* God, — and not merely at his call. To meet with God it must be a holy assembly : according to Deut. 23 no wicked or unclean person might “enter into the Ecclesia of Jehovah.” Holiness was ascribed to it in a proper sense, as expressive of its actual character, and not merely in view of the moral task which was *proposed* to it. In Deut. 33 : 3, 4, the “peoples” (or “tribes”) and “the assembly of Jacob” correspond with “his saints” (LXX. οἱ ἁγιασμένοι).

The common Christian use of “the saints” as a descriptive name for the whole congregation or Church undoubtedly had its root in the Old Testament, and we are not justified in supposing in either case that the

word is to be taken in an unnatural sense, — still less that a discrimination was made between an invisible congregation composed solely of saints, and a concrete and visible one which is made up of good and bad. The difficulty is that holiness is not predicated of the Church as a whole, as an ideal abstraction which exists independently of its members; but of the members themselves collectively ("the saints"); though it is evident that among them there must be some whose character does not correspond with the title. Luther's explanation was that the word is used synecdochically, describing the whole by the part. We have to beware, however, of importing our own discriminations into the New Testament idea of the Church. This objective mode of speech was peculiarly consonant with the Jewish type of mind, but it is not strange that it did not long survive among the Gentiles.

It is true that none but holy persons are to be thought of as assembling in effective communion with God, and that the assembly can be regarded as a Church only in so far as it is composed of true disciples convened in the name of the Lord. But though there be actually false members in the Church, it is not necessary to dwell upon the fact, — still less to construct our definition of the Church with a view to obviating this incongruity.

We cannot say that the New Testament writers did not reflect upon the incongruity of false membership in the Church (cf. 1 John 2: 19); nor that St. Paul in particular would have experienced any difficulty in applying to the Church, if the occasion had demanded it, the same distinction which he uses in relation to the ancient Israel in Rom. 9: 6, — "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel;" but there is no hint that such considerations did actually influence the apostolic

definition of the Church. Even in the early Catholic period the Church was still defined with sole reference to its true members; and so long as the character of the great majority of the disciples corresponded substantially with the ideal, it was possible to ignore the exceptions. It was only when wide-spread corruption forced men to *dwell* upon this incongruity, that they felt obliged to choose between a radical purification of the Church, or a new definition of it such as the trend of Catholic development demanded, — that is, as an *institute*, which enjoyed the character of holiness apart from any consideration of the character of its members. Our Lord's parables about the wheat and the tares, and the net containing good and bad fishes, furnished a convenient pretext for this definition, but no sound justification of it. Even if we were justified here in simply substituting the Church for the Kingdom; yet, rightly interpreted, the first parable (Matt. 13: 24–30) does not make the “field” the express analogue of the Kingdom: rather, like the “net” in the second parable (Matt. 13: 47–50), it represents the world, the secular sphere of the Kingdom's growth.

#### § 8, JESUS' USE OF THE WORD CHURCH

The use of the word *ἐκκλησία*, it is well known, is ascribed to Jesus only in the Gospel of St. Matthew, and there only in two passages: 16: 18 sq. and 18: 17 sqq. It is not strange that doubts have been raised about the trustworthiness of the record. Jesus spoke much about the Kingdom of God, but these two references to the Church — unsupported by any other Gospel — stand so isolated in his teaching, that they have even been taken for interpolations of a later age, in favor of



ecclesiastical authority, — though interpreting, it might be, genuine sayings about the Kingdom. But, on the other hand, the motive of such falsification is not clear; and if there were no such record we should be tempted to assume some solemn saying of our Lord to account for the general and uniform use of the term *Ecclesia* from the very beginning of the Apostolic Age. We may even guess that these two occasions were not the only ones upon which Jesus spoke of his Church. The second passage assumes that the idea was a familiar one, at least in a Jewish sense; and it conceives very concretely of the Christian community. We are unfortunately not in a position to determine how far the current Jewish usage<sup>1</sup> might explain our Lord's employment of this term, but what has been already said about its use in the Old Testament shows that its meaning could not have been altogether strange to the disciples. It is evident, however, that we must take the word Church in its essential meaning, as the equivalent of congregation and assembly, and strip it of the associations which reflect its historical development (precise forms of government and cultus), if we are to believe that it was used by Jesus and was intelligible to his disciples.

The truth is, there is no presumption against such a use of the word Church — or even "my Church" — as is recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, unless we are

<sup>1</sup> Hort, pp. 13 sq., refers to Ps. 74:2 (usually supposed to be a very late Psalm) and the significant rendering of it in St. Paul's address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28, finding there a hint that the two Old Testament words which we translate "congregation" and "assembly" might have acquired in later Jewish use a theological significance about equal to the solemn designation "people" of God. The Psalm reads: "Remember thy congregation which thou didst purchase of old, didst redeem to be the tribe of thine inheritance." The LXX translates the original *'ēdhāh* as usual by *συναγωγή*, but St. Paul substitutes *ἐκκλησία*: "to feed the Church of God which he purchased with his own blood."

prepared to answer in the negative the more radical question, whether Jesus entertained at all the intention of founding a Church, or any separate organization of his disciples, in distinction from the national congregation of Israel.

The parables of the Kingdom of heaven hardly furnish a pertinent answer to this inquiry. They do not tell us, for example, whether a particular social organization is a requisite for the consummation of that divine rule, or for the realization here on earth of that divinely generated life with its promise of eternal blessedness, which is what Jesus meant by the Kingdom. The Kingdom is already present, in so far as it is realized in those who receive the seed of the word in good soil where it springs up and bears fruit. But the wheat and the tares grow in the same field, and caution is given against the endeavor to separate them. Good and bad fish are included in the same net. Most of the parables have to do with the personal reception of the divine word, the inward apprehension of it; and even in describing the new life which is thereby engendered nothing is said of the reciprocal activities and common ordinances belonging to a separate community. The moral and religious forces of the Kingdom, slow and hidden like the leaven, operate in the whole mass of mankind. In the parable of the mustard seed the Kingdom is represented as an objective unity, spreading itself abroad over the earth; but there is nothing here to tell us how far those who are incorporated in this growth are sundered from the congregation of Israel, or bound together in a social organization of their own.

C. The relation of the Church to the Kingdom of God is a question upon which opinions widely differ. Upon Jesus' first mention of the Church (Matt. 16 : 18, 19) he set it in relation

to the Kingdom — “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church. . . . I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven;” — but what the relation is, is not specifically stated. From Jesus’ use of the two words in the same context we may, however, gather this much, that they are not simply identical, — as the Catholic theologians, following Augustine, have taken them to be. But neither are they to be sharply contrasted, as it is now the Protestant fashion to do. The true relation it is very difficult, perhaps impossible, for us to define; but we may approximate a true idea of it by eliminating the more signal errors of the common interpretation. When the Church is conceived in terms of its external organization (as by the Reformed theologians, who have never rid themselves of the Catholic notion) the contrast with the Kingdom is inevitable. But when we think of the Church in Jesus’ sense, as the congregation of his disciples, we find that it lies on the same plane with the Kingdom, and closely corresponds with it, — so far at least as the latter is realized in this present world, in distinction from its final and perfect revelation, and without reference to its preparation in the Old Covenant. It needs to be remarked by the way that the apostolic conception of the Church was bounded by the earthly sphere and included no reference to the souls of the faithful departed — what we call the Church triumphant. Even so far as this present age is concerned, the idea of the Kingdom did not take especial account of such social organization as is essential to the notion of the Church or congregation. And yet the members of both Church and Kingdom were the same persons. Only those could count as true members of the Church of Christ who were truly joined together as his disciples and assembled in his name, — having consequently their part in the Kingdom. And, on the other hand, it is impossible to believe that any one who has received the seed of the word and has a part in the Kingdom will remain foreign to the brotherhood of Christ’s disciples.

It is a mistake to suppose that the difference between the Kingdom and the Church is the difference between inward and outward, or between ideal and real. The Kingdom has its real existence in the character of its members and their social con-

duct; it has its outward and visible signs in the preaching of the word and in the fruit which it bears; though none of these things are the objects strictly of sensible "observation." The Church, likewise, though it appears to the world as an outward association like other human societies, is constituted in reality the assembly and Church of Christ only by reason of the inward bonds which unite all the members to him. The essence of the Church does not lie in externals. Jesus prescribed for his Church no external forms of organization, or of dogma, or of cultus — except baptism and the Lord's Supper, and these, according to the third and sixth chapters of St. John's Gospel, are interpreted as sacraments of the Kingdom.

Equally at fault is the distinction drawn by Ritschl and his followers, which is to-day the most popular one. It does not correspond at all to the sense of these words, as used by Christ or by the apostolic writers, to distinguish the Church as an association for religious ends, from the Kingdom as an ethical institute. The Kingdom of God, according to this notion, finds its realization in those who believe in Christ and live in the mutual exercise of brotherly love; while the Church, on the other hand, exists chiefly for the purpose of divine service — understood in the sense of a common worship or cult. But what stands first and foremost in Jesus' teaching about the conditions of membership in the Kingdom is the right attitude and behavior *towards God*; and the Church as a practical organization is made possible by no other bond than that of *brotherly love*, exhibiting itself in mutual comfort and edification. The fact is that this distinction ignores one of the most noteworthy characteristics of Christianity, according to which "divine service," in its proper sense, is not fulfilled in terms of a religious cult, but in ethical will and conduct — expressed largely in the service of man. That is to say, divine and human service are rather identified than contrasted, the moral and the religious ideals are united.

Some would take the Kingdom in a more comprehensive sense, as including the whole life and activity of its members and furnishing the solution of all the practical problems which their position in the world — their complex social and civil



relations — forces upon them. Of this it can only be said that it is more comprehensive than the New Testament idea of the Kingdom of God, which is restricted to the central region of morality and religion — a heart freely given to God, a life which is lived in him and yet finds its blessedness in the meek yoke of social service, association in brotherly love which has no other object but to realize that life and acquit that service.

The fact that the Kingdom of God, which was the predominant theme of Jesus' teaching receded to a secondary and almost an insignificant place in the teaching of the Apostolic Age, is a problem for which we have no adequate solution. It is especially remarkable that St. Paul, who makes so much of the Church, should make so little reference to the Kingdom. It is not because he counted the latter idea the less important or significant. On the contrary, he associated with the idea of the Kingdom of God a heavenly perfection which the actual development of the Church was still far from realizing, — which it could never realize before the second coming of Christ and the radical transformation which he must then effect. Toward this consummation the Church tends, and already the "saints" enjoy the spiritual blessings of the Kingdom — righteousness, peace and joy. Not only are they made meet to be inheritors of the saints in light, but already they are translated into the Kingdom of the Son, and made to sit with him in heavenly places (Col. 1:12 sq.; Ephes. 2:6). But for St. Paul, as well as for the rest of the Apostles, the Kingdom belongs essentially to the coming *aon*, it remains still to be "inherited" (2 Thes. 1:5; 1 Cor. 6:9 sq.; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Ephes. 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 12:28; James 2:5; 2 Pet. 1:11). In so far as Jewish apocalyptic expectations of the Kingdom were still cherished, it was manifestly impossible to account the actual condition of the Church an adequate realization of them. St. Paul so idealized the Church that he might — so it seems — have identified it with the loftiest conception of the Kingdom, — but as a matter of fact he did not so do. We may say that no Apostle succeeded in maintaining, with such lively reality as did Jesus, a conception of the Kingdom as



a present blessing, a possession here and now to be attained, a heavenly consummation which is actually realized on earth in the persons of Christ's disciples. None, I would say, unless it be St. John, who (though he too gave up the use of the *word*), interpreted most truly the Lord's *doctrine* of the Kingdom in terms of "*eternal life*," which he characteristically conceived as a present possession — life now or never, now and forever.

I cannot too much regret that the admirable little work by Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church*, New York, 1903, did not appear in time to assist me in formulating the above definition of a very difficult subject. I am glad, however, to be able to append here a reference to this simple and popular book, which I cannot but account the ablest work that has appeared on this theme.

But, on the other hand, we have in the idea of *discipleship* a direct preparation for the Kingdom. Actually, the disciples were united by very real bonds of association; and the more deeply they apprehended the character of their relation to Jesus — not as a mere rabbi but as the spiritual Lord — the more clearly they realized the ties of Christian brotherhood. They constituted Christ's *flock* (Luke 12 : 32 ; John 10 : 1 sqq.), according to a metaphor which derives a solemn significance from its Old Testament use, and which seems here to stand mid-way between the idea of the Kingdom and that of the Church. The formal choice of the Twelve was a step towards the organization of the congregation of Christ's disciples; and, though this doubtless symbolized the ultimate inclusion of all the tribes of Israel, the disciples could not but feel their separateness within their race and nation, since in the actual present it was they alone who had accepted the opportunity and become in fact sons of the Kingdom. Their separateness became more sharply defined as Jewish hate and

repudiation of Jesus drew to its culmination. Then, if not before, it must have been evident that with Jesus' departure, for which he was endeavoring to prepare them, they must still hold together to labor for the common cause, as the mission of the Twelve and of the Seventy had set them example.

It seems as if in his teaching about the Kingdom on the one hand, and about discipleship on the other, Jesus had reached nearly the same point by following opposite ways. Starting with the idea of the Kingdom, it seems to have been his constant effort to purge it of the concrete associations which were current among the Jews, — but surely without meaning to deny all the social implications of the word. On the other hand, the idea of discipleship, which from the very outset of his ministry he began to develop, had few precise associations of any kind, and needed only to be defined, — as it *gradually* was by the actual character and constitution of the society which Jesus formed. Starting with the idea of the Kingdom, Jesus made it substantially coincident with discipleship; and in terms of discipleship he developed the idea of the Church. The full notion of the Church — in particular its religious significance — could not possibly be realized so long as Jesus remained with his disciples upon terms of human, social intercourse. It was only when he passed again into the heavenly, invisible sphere, and *religious* intercourse was begun with him there, that the highest conception of the Church could be realized, — in particular, that the disciples could comprehend what was meant by assembling *in his name*. This affected not only the idea of the spiritual or invisible unity of the Church, but its concrete organization; for to this spiritual community of the Church with Christ — no longer merely with him,

but *in* him — there could not but correspond a closer religious and social unity among the members. The idea of discipleship progressed from stage to stage, and the idea of the Church followed its progress. To form their idea of the nature of Christian discipleship, Jesus left his disciples largely to the teaching of facts, that is, to the apprehension they must form from the actual progress of the congregation which he was a-building. So, too, he never defined his Church, nor laid down rules for its organization; but left his followers to learn its true character from the development which was conditioned by the very fact of his Resurrection and Ascension, and from its subsequent progress under the guidance of the Spirit.

St. John's Gospel throws light upon this subject. This is preëminently the Gospel of discipleship. It seldom speaks of the Kingdom by name, but it constantly interprets one side of this notion in terms of discipleship, and so deepens this conception that it substantially corresponds to the apostolic idea of the Church in its Godward aspect.

It is significant that Peter's inspired confession, "Thou art the Christ," was the occasion of Jesus' first mention of the Church. Everything indicates that this recognition of his higher character was a crisis in Jesus' career:—from that time he began to prepare his disciples for his suffering fate. Before this, he could proclaim the Kingdom of God without seeming to the Jews to exceed the measure of the prophetic office; but it was only when his disciples acknowledged him as the Messiah — and only to them — that he could speak of *his* Church. In saying that he would "*build*" his Church (Assembly), it is evident that he uses the word "assembly" (קִהְלָה) in the high religious sense

which was associated with the word "people" in the Old Testament. The figure of building is applied even more expressly to the Church in 1 Cor. 3 : 9; Ephes. 2 : 20-22; 1 Pet. 2 : 5. According to the Old Testament it was God who "built" his people Israel, and the prophets looked forward to a *rebuilding*, which likewise could be accomplished by no other than God himself. We might rather expect Jesus to say in this place that he would build *again* the *people of Israel*. This was doubtless substantially his meaning. We have seen, however, why the words "congregation" or "assembly" might be preferable to a word which bore the connotation of racial exclusiveness — and inclusiveness. And in saying that he will build — not *rebuild* — *his* Church he asserts even a higher claim of Messianic dignity, and characterizes his building as a new creation, and as a possession more peculiarly his own.

In this first passage Jesus speaks of his Church in the most general sense. In Matt. 18 : 17-20, however, he refers specifically to the congregation of his disciples as outwardly assembled. This, we have seen, is the proper sense of קָהָל, which was surely the word our Lord used. The notion of the Church is here very concrete. The word is used as though it necessarily *implied* a local assembly. The Church is thought of as convened for the purpose of regulating authoritatively its internal affairs. The special instance here contemplated is the hearing and judging of complaints of brother against brother, — a case which may involve the exercise of discipline, and even excommunication. But concretely as the Church is here conceived, nothing is said of the character of its organization, nor is any — not to say any particular — organization at all implied. On the contrary, the regularity and validity of the



Church's action is made to depend solely upon the reality of the disciples' relation to Christ. The Church remains essentially a spiritual fact, however concretely it may be conceived. It is an assembly or Church though there be but two or three, and those that gathered together in Jesus' name are assured of his presence in the midst of them. His presence surely implies that the deliberations and actions of the Church are thereby regulated in conformity with his will; for nothing short of this is consistent with the relation of disciples to their Master, or of sons of the Kingdom to their Lord and King. We may take it, too, that the *consent* or *agreement* which is required as touching any thing that may be asked in prayer is likewise conditioned by the fact of spiritual unity in Christ. In any case, *agreement* — and the fact of being "gathered together" which it implies — is essential to the idea of the Church: there is no such thing as an invisible Church in which the members have no concrete relations with one another.

It is commonly thought that Jesus here speaks of a local Church, in distinction from the Church universal. It is true that the Church is here conceived of as locally assembled, and it could of course be assembled no otherwise. One may suppose, too, that it need not be an assembly of all the disciples. But of the assumed *distinction* between local or particular, and universal, there is no hint. We may rather say that Jesus did not reflect whether there might be various particular Churches in different places, but simply posits that *wherever* his disciples are gathered together, there is the place for such affairs to be brought for settlement. It is not to be denied that a serious problem is presented here; but as it emerges more



clearly in the apostolic use of the word church, the full significance of it will be considered in the next section.

Even here, however, it is plain that the powers of the local assembly—though they be but two or three—are the powers of the *whole* Church. The word church expresses not an extensive idea but an intensive. Its value is not proportioned to the number of its adherents but to the *reality* of their adherence to Christ—more properly, the value of the Christian assembly is expressed in the fact of Christ's presence in the midst of his disciples, and a value such as this is not to be measured. It is not the collective wisdom of the many that insures the soundness of the Church's deliberations: whether they be few or many, the fact of their agreement, the truth of their judgment, the value of their conduct depend upon the presence of Christ in the midst of them and upon his rule over them. Moreover, what this local assembly does, it does *for* the whole Church:—that is, the scope of its action is not locally limited, it is ecumenical.

In the particular case here considered, the sinning brother who refuses to hear the Church is excluded not merely from the local society but from the Christian brotherhood,—he is accounted “as the Gentile and the publican.” But this is not all: the judgment of the Church excludes not merely from an earthly society, but from heaven itself. Such a judgment as this is only possible through the inspiration of Christ's presence. That a *false* judgment of the Church can be binding in heaven is not to be thought of! It needs to be remarked, as a clue to the interpretation of this whole passage, that our Lord proceeds from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the ideal. He

is speaking of the concrete misdemeanor, and he first notices the judgment of the Church upon it, and its temporal penalty in exclusion from the brotherhood. Then he affirms that, "What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Then, speaking more generally of all the boons which the Church requires, he says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Finally, he explains the validity of the Church's judgment and the power of the Church's prayers by his own presence in the midst of his true disciples: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The power of binding and loosing is here ascribed to the Church. It does not belong to the individual disciples *apart* from the Church, but neither does it belong to the Church as a corporate entity apart, as we might say, from the disciples. In John 20:22, 23 the same power — here more plainly described as the forgiving and retaining of sins — is bestowed upon the disciples as such — whether collectively or individually it is not expressly said. However, in substantial conformity with the passage in St. Matthew's Gospel, this power is here conditioned upon the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which is invariably represented in the Scriptures as a personal gift. The inspiration of the Church is primarily the inspiration of its individual members: the Church as a corporation cannot receive nor exercise any spiritual gift — or *charisma*. The gifts which are bestowed severally upon the members are exercised in and for the body, but they are the direct and personal expression of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the dis-

ciple, not an exponent of the corporate inspiration of the Church.

To anticipate what must be discussed further on, it may be remarked here that the nature of all charismatic endowments is most clearly exemplified in the prophetic gift: so every officer of the Church, like the prophet, exercises the particular spiritual gift corresponding to his office, primarily not as an exponent of the Church, but as an exponent of God — always for the edification of the Church, indeed, but always in God's name. Hence the high character of ecclesiastical authority. It must not be forgotten, however, that though spiritual gifts are the personal endowment of individual disciples they belong to them only as *members of the body*.

The personal character of this gift of binding and loosing is clearly expressed in Matt. 16:19, where it is bestowed upon Peter: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." It is Simon the disciple that personally receives this power; but it is given to him, of course, only in response to his personal faith in Jesus as the Christ, and even here it is brought expressly into relation with the Church — *v.* 18. To form a concrete idea of the particular case of discipline which Jesus contemplates in Matt. 18:15-17, we have to suppose that the power of binding and loosing is exercised in the first instance by *one*, who is inspired to formulate a judgment upon the questions at issue; the part which the others take in the transaction is expressed by their *consent* (what we have here is a particular case of the trying of spirits), and so the judgment becomes an act of the Church.

We have not yet exhausted the significance of Jesus' first mention of his Church (Matt. 16 : 13-20). The moment was evidently a critical one in Jesus' ministry. He had taken the disciples apart — probably the Twelve alone are here meant — into the region of Caesarea Philippi, at a distance from the ordinary field of his labor. There he required of them an explicit confession of their faith in him, as distinguished from the opinions which were current among the people. It was Simon that answered : "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." He probably expressed the implicit faith of the rest ; but it had now become of importance, in view of the approaching persecution and rejection of Jesus, that this faith be explicitly apprehended by the disciples. At all events it was Simon Peter that first gave utterance to it, and it is evident that Jesus regarded this as a fact of the utmost moment. He welcomed it as a revelation of God to his disciple, and said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, . . . And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my Church." As the following verse clearly bestows upon Peter personally the "keys of the Kingdom of heaven," we must take it that he too is the *rock* upon which the Church is to be built, — and not interpret it of the faith which he professed, as many Protestant theologians have, for apologetic reasons, felt constrained to do.

Jesus, and his apostles after him, conceived quite concretely of the *building* of his Church : it was neither to be founded upon nor composed of an invisible abstraction like faith, but composed of the faithful disciples themselves. Truth is not the foundation of the Church : on the contrary, the Church is the foundation and substantial support of the truth (1



Tim. 3 : 15). The notion is no less concrete when the figure is varied and Jesus Christ is regarded as the sole foundation, as in 1 Cor. 3 : 11. Both notions are combined in Ephes. 2 : 19–22 : “being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; . . . in whom ye also are builded together.” It is also pertinent to adduce here 1 Pet. 2 : 5 : “ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.” Peter, by the confession of that faith which was essential to the building of the Church, became *actually* the first stone — indeed a foundation rock — of that edifice. To him, while he was as yet the only one who expressly recognized Jesus as the Messiah, was given the power which belongs to the Church. To this, and to the like promptness of spirit which he elsewhere displayed, was due the primacy among the apostles which Peter actually enjoyed. But that this power was bestowed upon him in his official capacity as apostle (or as chief of the apostles), there is no hint, — still less that it was an official prerogative which was meant to descend to an individual successor of Peter in the primacy of the Church (according to the Roman view), or to the bishops as representatives *in solidum* of the episcopate of Peter (according to the doctrine of Cyprian). On the contrary, we see from John 20 : 22, 23 and Matt. 18 : 17–20 that this power is given to the disciples as such and to the Church as a whole : — to every one that confesses a like faith with Peter, and, as a living stone, is built into the same edifice.

## § 9, THE APOSTOLIC NOTION OF THE CHURCH

In announcing the building of *his* Church, Jesus posited a closer bond of union between himself and his



followers, and a closer mutual attachment amongst them as a body, than was expressed by the relation of a teacher to his disciples. We can see in the Gospels that the idea of discipleship progressed from stage to stage, keeping pace with an ever profounder apprehension of the character of Jesus and of the nature of his disciples' relation to him. In the end, the idea of discipleship was found inadequate to express this relationship in its fulness. Jesus had awakened in his disciples the confidence that they were not merely on the way to the Kingdom of God, but were actually possessed of it; and the fellowship which was thus formed was no longer comparable to that of the Jewish rabbinical schools. Jesus was more than a *rabbi*, and the fellowship of his disciples was more than a *school*. The very fact of his *departure* from them made it impossible to maintain the earlier conception of discipleship.<sup>1</sup> By the faith in

<sup>1</sup> A purely secular development of the school of Jesus was *conceivable*. To spread and perpetuate the teaching of Jesus was the special mission of his Apostles, the Twelve whom he himself had chosen and instructed. The greater company which they in turn gathered about them after Pentecost is characterized in Acts 2:42 as "continuing steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching." It seems as though but little more was wanted to characterize the Apostles as rabbis—or "masters"—and the followers of Jesus as *their* disciples. But against such a development of his school, against the arrogation of such authority on the part of the Apostles, there stood the explicit command of the "one master," Christ. A distinct recollection was preserved of an important admonition of Jesus to his disciples (Matt. 23:8), "But be not *ye* called *Rabbi*, for *one* is your teacher, and all ye are brethren." This *logion* preserved equality among the brethren and confirmed their direct relation to Jesus as Master and Lord. The name "disciple" (*μαθητής*) continued to be used after the Ascension as it was before to characterize as his personal scholars all who belonged to the school of Jesus. As a *matter of fact* the school of Jesus was continued by his Apostles, and so long as many remained who could recount their personal recollections of the Lord the sense of discipleship must have been more vivid than was afterwards the case. At all events, it is not to be wondered at that the Christian community should be regarded *from without* as a *αἵρεσις* (Acts 24:5, 14), a sect or party among

his Resurrection and Ascension the school of Jesus was transformed into a religion; for the disciples were assured that with Jesus' departure into the heavenly sphere their intercourse with him was not broken off, but continued after a spiritual manner — in the same manner, that is, in which men may hold intercourse with God. Little as the disciples thought of separating from the religion of Israel, there were some elements even in their earliest cult which distinguished them from others of their nation, and could not fail in the end to divide them. This *religious* distinction was *the most essential mark* of Jesus' disciples, and we learn from the Acts of the Apostles (9:14, 21; 22:16) that they were known and designated as "those that call upon the name of the Lord" (or "of Jesus").

It is evident that a new name was needed to describe the disciples in terms of the new (religious) relation which was established with Jesus, and of the closer fellowship which was realized amongst themselves. Nevertheless the idea of discipleship, though inadequate, was true so far as it went; and it was only gradually that the name ceased to be used to designate the Christian community and the individuals which composed it. It was not used, however, by St. Paul, nor in any of the Epistles, and our only evidence for its continued use is the Acts, where it is still the most frequent name among several which are there concurrently employed.<sup>2</sup>

the Jews which cultivated particular tenets, after the analogy of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It was, however, *only* outside their community that the disciples were called Christians (Χριστιανοί) — Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16. Cf. Weizsäcker, *Apost. Zeitalter*, pp. 35 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> It is likewise only in the Acts that we learn of an interesting word which was used to describe Christianity in general, namely "the Way of God," or simply "the Way" (ἡ ὁδός) — Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22.

The words which gradually superseded the name "disciples," expressed more profoundly the nature of the Christian community. The community itself, and the several members of it regarded in their relations of mutual love and duty, were called "brethren." The use of this name, which is barely hinted at in the Gospels (Matt. 23 : 8), became at once universal in the apostolic Church; it was as much a characteristic of the Gentile as of the Jewish churches, of Paul's epistles as of the epistles of James and John. The name brethren had not only a social but a religious implication: primarily the disciples of Jesus were brethren because they were alike "sons of the Kingdom" or "sons of God." The religious relation, however, was more purely expressed in the name "the saints" — οἱ ἅγιοι — which was, so to speak, the liturgical name, characterizing the community as the congregation of God's people, and the members severally as co-religionists.

From either point of view — as brethren or as the saints — the disciples constituted something more than a school. Acts 2 : 42 summarizes the characteristics of the new community in four points: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and the fellowship (κοινωνία), in the breaking of bread and the prayers." That is to say, they had in common not only the apostolic teaching, consisting in reminiscences of Jesus and testimony to the fact that in fulfilment of prophecy he had been put to death and by the right hand of God raised up and exalted to be both Lord and Christ; but also certain peculiar religious practices, namely, the rite which the Lord had instituted in memorial of his death, and "*the prayers*" which were addressed to him or uttered in his name. Between these two terms, which denote more especially the doctrinal and religious aspect of the

Church, there is mentioned another word — *κοινωνία* — which signifies community and fellowship in general — in this context probably with express reference to the concrete acts of helpfulness in which the mutual love of the brethren was manifested (cf. vv. 44, 45), and consequently to the *moral* bond which united them. But this word expresses a notion which is highly characteristic of Christianity, and its meaning is never exhausted by a reference to the mere *act* of helpfulness. Even where the reference is most expressly to a concrete act of benevolence, the underlying moral notion of fellowship is never absent.

In the New Testament *κοινωνία* is used almost as a technical term, though the significance of it is lost to us through the failure of our English versions to render it uniformly by the same word. The most literal rendering would be communion or communication. It is very badly rendered in one of the familiar offertory sentences of the Book of Common Prayer by the word “distribute” — much better in the Authorized Version, “To do good and to *communicate* forget not” (Heb. 13:16). The same bad rendering (“distribution”) is given by the Authorized Version in 2 Cor. 9:13 (R. V. “contribution”), notwithstanding that in the preceding chapter (v. 4) the word is rightly translated “fellowship,” — in Rom. 15:26 both versions have “contribution.” This latter rendering, though it is much to be preferred to “distribution,” ignores the essential character of the act which it describes. Almsgiving, indeed, which was a mere *distribution*, was cultivated as a pious practice by the Christians no less than by the Jews. We have sufficient evidence of this in the Acts, and chiefly with reference to beggars. But the Christian consciousness observed a distinction between



the works of charity which were performed towards men in general, and the "communion" in worldly goods with fellow-members of the household of faith (Gal. 6 : 10). The latter was not properly a part of almsgiving but the natural and necessary expression of Christian fellowship.

Whatever may have been the actual economic situation in the Church at Jerusalem in the early days, as depicted in Acts 2 : 44, 45, it is evident that the having "all things in common" was regarded by the author of this book as the proper fulfilment of the ideal of the Christian community. St. Paul cherished the same ideal, the ideal of "equality" among the brethren (2 Cor. 8 : 13-15), and without advocating any Utopian scheme for the uniform redistribution of wealth, he makes this the ground of his appeal for a collection in behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem. From this point of view the "alms" which St. Paul carried to the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 24 : 17) was not a mere distribution or contribution from the Gentile Churches, but it was — as it is characteristically called — a "fellowship" (2 Cor. 8 : 4 ; 9 : 13). St. Paul's language, especially in 2 Cor. 9 : 12-15, invests this act with a liturgical character. This context, among other proofs, assures us that he regarded the gift not only as a pledge of the sincerity of fellowship, but as an important practical means for confirming the same.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Besides this consideration, St. Paul in Rom. 15 : 27 calls attention to the fact that the Gentiles were debtors to their Jewish brethren: "For if the Gentiles have been made partakers (ἐκοινωνήσαν) of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister (λειτουργήσαι) unto them in carnal things." The same characteristic use which we have noted in the case of *κοινωνία* is to be observed in some of its cognates: *κοινωνέω* in Rom. 12 : 13; Gal. 6 : 6 and Phil. 4 : 15; *κοινωνικός* in 1 Tim. 6 : 16; and *κοινωνός* in 1 Cor. 10 : 18, 20.



If *κοινωνία* were used only to denote the practical exhibitions of the spirit of Christian fellowship it would be deprived of much of its significance. In fact its proper and more frequent sense is that of fellowship in general, or more particularly in the deep things of Christian experience and faith. When it is said in Gal. 2 : 9 that the Apostles of the Jews gave to the Apostles of the Gentiles the right hand of fellowship, nothing else can be meant than the recognition that they were partakers in common of the same faith. St. Paul speaks again of fellowship in the faith in Ephes. 3 : 9 ; Phil. 1 : 5 ; and Philem. 6. In a still deeper sense he speaks of fellowship in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. 3 : 10), and of the fellowship of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 13 : 14 ; Phil. 2 : 1, — in the latter place it has also a social significance). St. John uses the word only in the general sense of fellowship with God (or Christ) and with one another (1 John 1 : 3, 6, 7). In the last of these verses St. John implies that fellowship with the brotherhood is a condition of fellowship with God in Christ. But it is likewise true that fellowship with God (or Christ) is the deepest bond which unites the brotherhood. The Lord's Supper is the sacrament of this double fellowship: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion (*κοινωνία*) of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one loaf, one body: for we all partake of the one loaf."

All of the notions which we have been considering in this section — those, namely, which are expressed by the names "disciples," "brethren," and "saints" and by the word "fellowship" — must be reckoned as constituents of the apostolic idea of the Church. In all this

there is nothing which is not in perfect harmony with that notion of the Church — the assembly of God's people — which we considered in the preceding section and have reason to attribute to Jesus. In particular, there is nothing which suggests any emphasis upon formal organization: on the contrary, the whole nature of the Church consists in the religious bond which unites the disciples to Christ, who is ever present in the midst of them; in the consequent holiness of the assembly and its members; and in the spirit of brotherhood which expresses itself in appropriate acts of fellowship. Some organization of course there must be. But the actual form which the organization of the Christian community shall take is left undetermined by these considerations. Surely it is impossible that any *particular* form of organization, or any formal law, can ever rightly be accounted essential to the Church! In the following section, where the character of Church organization is considered, we shall see that legal exaction of any sort is incompatible with the very nature of the Church.

But one question may here be raised about the form of organization, since it is connected with our present consideration of the *names* which were used to describe the Christian community in the earliest age. It is a popular conception that the early Christian societies in Palestine and among the Jews of the dispersion were organized on the model of the Synagogue — practically, as new synagogues side by side with the old. But the local Jewish community ordinarily found expression for the unity of its religious life in a single synagogue, and to set up another organization of the same sort could only be regarded as separation and apostasy. The whole relation of the earliest Christians to the Jewish national and religious society forbids such a supposition.

The Christians entertained no thought of separation; they desired to remain in the bonds of Jewish nationality and under the authority of the Jewish magistrates; they were so scrupulous to observe the law, that when they were summoned before the supreme court — the Sanhedrin — there was no crime that could be alleged against them nor any pretext found for definitive punishment; — it was necessary to let them go with only such exemplary threat or castigation as is mentioned in Acts 4 : 21 and 5 : 40. It was possible for the Christians to maintain such a position in Jewish society because Judaism allowed not only considerable latitude of opinion and the formation of separate doctrinal schools, but even associations for the practice of a separate religious cult, as is proved by the example of the Essenes. Strange as it may seem, the modern Jewish conception of *orthodoxy* as a condition of communion was borrowed from the Christian Church.

The notion of separate synagogues for the Christians cannot be entertained — except perhaps at Jerusalem. Acts 6 : 9 speaks of “the synagogue so called of the Libertines [that is, Roman Jews], and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia.” It is not perfectly clear whether one synagogue is referred to or many, though the more probable meaning is that there were a number of independent meeting-places to which the Jews from the several countries here mentioned were wont to resort. One might fancy that the Christians, as a society of Galileans (Acts 1 : 11; 2 : 7), constituted a separate synagogue of this sort. But the name does not occur in a sense appropriate to this theory: on the contrary, from Acts 11 : 26, we have rather to suppose that the Christians were called

Nazarenes, a name which denoted the origin of the founder, not of the society.<sup>4</sup>

In this connection it must not be overlooked that the name synagogue is never applied to the Christian assembly — except in James 2: 2. We have seen in the preceding section what reasons there were for preferring *ἐκκλησία* to *συναγωγή* as the name of the Christian society, even if the Old Testament use of the two words were alone to be considered. It was, however, the *contemporary* Jewish use of the word synagogue, to describe the several legally organized local societies — and *not the congregation of Israel as a whole*, which rendered it peculiarly unapt as a name for that society which felt itself to be the assembly of the people of God. The Christians probably lacked the *right* to organize themselves as a particular synagogue under the Jewish law, and at all events such an organization was hardly in keeping with the nature of their society. The Synagogue in its religious as well as its social aspect was inadequate as an expression of the Christian ideal, and the local and particular character of its organization was incompatible with the idea of the Church of God.

If the early Jewish Christians did not organize themselves after the model of the Synagogue, the Gentile converts would surely be less inclined to do so, — though the separation of Jews and Christians which came about as a consequence of the mission to the Gentiles undoubtedly gave opportunity for the formation of Christian synagogues *outside* the Jewish communion. There can of course be no doubt that the Christian society was *organized*, — at first within the national and religious community of Israel, and afterwards in-

<sup>4</sup> See Weizsäcker, *Apost. Zeitalter*, pp. 38 sq.



dependent of it. The question is merely, What was the character of that organization? The fact that the name synagogue — which might readily have been so qualified as to render its Christian application unambiguous — was not used even to designate the local community of Christians, goes to prove that the Church and the Synagogue were incommensurable entities, and that even in their formal aspects (in point of organization) they were not enough alike to suggest comparison.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus himself significantly called the Church he was to build "*my* Church." It is no less significant that throughout the rest of the New Testament it is *not* expressly called *his* Church.<sup>6</sup> For the most part the word Church (or Churches) is used absolutely, as the *nomen proprium* of the Christian society, either with or without a local designation. But the full and solemn title was "the Church of God."<sup>7</sup> For all this, however, it

<sup>5</sup> Schürer, *Jewish People*, div. II. vol. II. p. 59, note.

<sup>6</sup> Except in Rom. 16:16, "All the Churches of Christ salute you." On this difficult passage see Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 110 sq. He takes it to mean the Churches of Judea, as those which had the most immediate historical relations with the Messiah. It is to be compared with Gal. 1:22, "and I continued unknown to the Churches in Judea that are in Christ," and 1 Thes. 2:14, "became imitators of the Churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus."

<sup>7</sup> "With the exception, however, of two places in 1 Tim. (iii: 5, 15), where the old name is used with a special force derived from the context, this name is confined to St. Paul's earlier epistles, the two to the Thessalonians, the two to the Corinthians, and Galatians. It is very striking that at this time, when his antagonism to the Judaizers was at its hottest, he never for a moment set a new Ecclesia against the old, an Ecclesia of Jesus or even an Ecclesia of the Christ against the Ecclesia of God, but implicitly taught his heathen converts to believe that the body into which they were baptized was itself the Ecclesia of God." Hort, *op. cit.*, p. 108. It is impossible to suppose that this usage was a peculiarity of St. Paul's. On the contrary, it is reasonable to believe that the name "the Church of God" was more common among the Jewish than among the Gentile Christians. The use of the name Church in Matt. 16:18; 18:17; and in the Apocalypse is sufficient to prove that it was not a



was of course regarded no whit less as the Church of Jesus Christ; and it would be superfluous here to collect proof of the apostolic belief that it is his building, his body, constituted in its very essence by his presence in the midst of it. It is more pertinent to remark that the relation of the Church to Christ is occasionally expressed in the very name (see note 6), and more frequently in characteristic descriptions of the Church which St. Paul gives in the address of a number of his epistles. The Church of the Thessalonians is in both epistles said to be "in God the (or our) Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." In 1 Cor. 1: 2 "the Church of God which is at Corinth" is further described as "Them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." St. Paul addresses his epistle to the Philippians "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi." He calls the men of Ephesus "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," and the men of Colossae "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." No name that might be used for the Church could make clearer the fact that it is in reality the Church of Jesus Christ. When Jesus first spoke of it as *his* Church it was highly important to affirm explicitly this relationship. In that moment no one could entertain a suspicion that the school of Jesus' disciples might be separated from the covenant of God's people Israel. The name *Ecclesia* itself sufficed to link the new society to the past, the newness of this creation was expressed in the fact that it was *his* *Ecclesia*, the building of the Messiah. But the time came when the disciples of Christ were actually sundered from the Jews; there was danger then that the ideal relationship of the Christian *Ecclesia*

name invented by St. Paul, but one which he adopted from current usage. The name Church of God is simply the fuller expression for what is implied in the name Church itself.

to the Ecclesia of old might be ignored: hence the significance of the name "the Ecclesia of God."

In the Greek republic there was as a matter of course but *one* Ecclesia, the popular assembly of all citizens. According to the language of the Septuagint there was again, and equally as a matter of course, but *one* Ecclesia, the popular assembly of Israel. According also to the Christian use of the word we may expect to find that but *one* Ecclesia is conceivable, the assembly of *all Christendom* — the new people of God, the new Israel.<sup>8</sup>

At first sight the language of the New Testament seems to contradict this notion of the Church. In nearly all the passages in which the word Ecclesia here occurs it signifies — so it appears — local assemblies, *not* the whole of Christendom.<sup>9</sup> There is an Ecclesia in Corinth (1 Cor. 1 : 2), another in Cenchrea (Rom. 16 : 1), a third in Thessalonica (1 Thes. 1 : 1), etc. Hence the frequent use of the plural.<sup>10</sup> There is *not one* Church, but there are many, innumerable Ecclesiae of Christians,

<sup>8</sup> The remainder of this section and the whole of the following is taken from Sohmn, pp. 18 sqq. They express the most fundamental thesis of his work, and for this reason I prefer to state the case in his own words.

<sup>9</sup> Still, the word Ecclesia is obviously used several times in the New Testament for the whole of Christendom. Especially in our Lord's saying in Matt. 16 : 18, "upon this rock will I build my Church." Likewise 1 Cor. 12 : 28, "God hath set some *in the Church*, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers," etc. In 1 Cor. 15 : 9 and Gal. 1 : 13 St. Paul speaks of the time when he "persecuted the Church of God," — cf. Phil. 3 : 6. In 1 Cor. 10 : 32 the Corinthians are exhorted to "give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God." In Ephes. 1 : 22, 23 and Col. 1 : 24, 25 the Church is represented as the body of Christ. Throughout the epistle to the Ephesians the name is frequently used absolutely and in the general sense which denotes the whole people of God.

<sup>10</sup> So for example in 1 Thes. 2 : 14; Rom. 16 : 14, 16; 1 Cor. 7 : 17; 11 : 16; in 2 Cor. in *every case* except the address (1 : 1); Rev. 2 : 7, etc.

in the wide extent of the Roman Empire. It is the local *congregation*, so it seems, that is called *Ecclesia*, not the Church universal. Upon the observation of this fact is based the prevailing view that for early Christian organization the notion of the local congregation (a legal notion) was fundamental, not the notion of the Church (a spiritual notion).

But this is not all: the name *Ecclesia* was applied not only to the whole company of Christians in one place, but to the mere household assembly as well — the Christians that were wont to gather in a particular house.<sup>11</sup>

It is this last fact, however, which points us to the correct solution. It shows clearly that the word *Ecclesia* expresses *no* definite empirical magnitude, *no* particular social organization — not even that of the local community, but simply a dogmatic value-judgment (*dogmatisches Werturteil*). The name *Ecclesia* is applied to every assembly which dogmatically — according to its spiritual value as it is apprehended by *faith* — constitutes an assembly of *Christendom*, an assembly of the people of the New Covenant before and with God (or Christ). This conception of the Church is founded upon our Lord's word (Matt. 18 : 20), "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Where the Lord is, the head of the body, there is *Christendom*: where two or three are gathered in Christ's name, there is the *people of Christ*, the New Testament Israel; there is *the whole of Christendom* with all its promised privileges; for Christ is in the midst, and that is all in all. Where Christ is, there is the *Ecclesia* — the people of God. Hence the saying

<sup>11</sup> Rom. 16 : 5; 1 Cor. 16 : 19; Philem. 2; Col. 4 : 15; — cf. Rom. 16 : 14, 15.

which early became proverbial: *ubi tres ibi ecclesia*.<sup>12</sup> Christian faith sees in every company of Christians assembled in the Spirit, all Christendom, the whole Church. Hence it is that *every assembly of Christians*, whether it be great or small, which is gathered in the name of the Lord is called Ecclesia, the popular assembly of the New Testament Israel. The Church is an idea which cannot be subjected to quantitative measurement, neither can any partitive terms be applied to it. The *whole* Church is not composed of individual Churches, neither is the individual Church regarded as a *part* of the whole. The Church is ever a whole and it has no separable parts. There is but *one* Ecclesia, the assembly of *the whole of Christendom*: but this one Ecclesia has innumerable manifestations. It is manifested in the assembly of the local (city or village) congregation, but quite as much so again in the household congregation, and in innumerable other Christian assemblies,—and what is there represented is not a local or a household congregation as such, but the Church of God.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The proverbial use of this phrase appears from Tertullian, *De exhort. castit.* c. 7, *ubi tres, ecclesia est*; *De baptismo* c. 6, *ubi tres, id est Pater et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus, ibi ecclesia, quae trium corpus est*; *De pudic.* c. 21, *ecclesiam quam Dominus in tribus posuit*; *De fuga* c. 14, *Sit tibi et in tribus ecclesia*.—Cf. Ignatius, *ad Smyrn.* 8: 2, *ὅπου ἂν ᾖ ὁ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία*.—Hatch, *Organization*, note 24 to p. 124, in explanation of this first quotation from Tertullian remarks: "This number, three, was the legal minimum of a Roman *Collegium*!" To this Sohm remarks: "One sees how easily every thing Christian can be referred to a pagan origin."

<sup>13</sup> Ἐκκλησία is sometimes used in the New Testament in such a way that its etymological sense of *assembly* is evidently prominent in the mind of the writer. So 1 Cor. 11: 18, "When ye come together ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ;"—cf. 14: 19, 28, 34, 35. Ecclesia, wherever it occurs, denotes the assembly of Christendom. The above passages would be literally translated by our familiar idiom, "*in Church*," though of course the actual connotation of our modern phrase is not the same. The principal assem-



The fundamental idea of primitive Christianity is that of the *Church* (Ecclesia). The only assembly which it recognized was the Church-assembly—the assembly of the Ecclesia, the assembly of Christendom. There is no such thing as a local or a household assembly as such: what we actually call a local assembly, namely, the principal congregation of the Christians of a particular town, is what it is, *not* as a mere local assembly, but as a manifestation of the Ecclesia, the assembly of the people of Christ collectively. The principal or main assembly of a locality (which we with our modern way of thinking are accustomed to regard as the *authorized*—if not the full—assembly of all the Christians of that place) was not an absolutely necessary or invariable expression of Christian life in the primitive age, at all events it was by no means the sole form in which the Ecclesia was manifested. Side by side with it every other Christian assembly is equally an Ecclesia, and is equally empowered to perform every spiritual function,—baptism, the Eucharist, and ordination. It is a matter of perfect indifference whether or not the assembly be such as may be considered representative of the local community: it is of moment only that *Christendom* be represented, that the Ecclesia be assembled.

The idea of the local congregation (the parish)—indeed of any *congregation* in the narrower modern sense of the word—is one which has absolutely no bearing upon the organization of the Church. There is no such thing as an assembly of the local congregation, or of the

bly of the Christians of a particular locality bears the name Ecclesia because it constitutes an assembly, *not* of this or that local community, but of the whole of Christendom, of Israel;—precisely the same was it with the assembly of the household congregation.



household congregation, or of any other congregation as such; and consequently there are no organs or officers of such congregation.<sup>14</sup> This excludes every notion of parochial or local organization — more generally, of any organization which is expressed in terms of a definite society, club, or corporation. In Christendom there are none but ecumenical assemblies (*Ecclesiae*), and the organs of such assemblies are ecumenical organs or officers. *The Ecclesia alone exists, and consequently the Ecclesia alone is organized.*<sup>15</sup> Such organization as develops must

<sup>14</sup> Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 114 sq., notes “the total absence of territorial language (so to speak) in the designations of local *Ecclesiae*.” “Three times the *Ecclesia* meant is designated by the adjectival local name of its members, viz. in the salutations to 1 and 2 Thessalonians (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Θεσσαλονικέων, ‘of Thessalonians;’ this personal description being in effect a partial substitute for the absence of anything like κλητοῦς ἁγίοις), and in a reference to the *Ecclesia* ‘of the Laodiceans’ (τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ) in Col. iv. 16. In all other cases of a single city the *Ecclesia* is designated as ‘in’ that city: so in the salutations of 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians; also Cenchreae (Rom. xvi. 1), and each of the seven *Ecclesiae* of the Apocalypse. When the reference is to a whole region including a number of cities and therefore of *Ecclesiae* the usage is, on the surface, not quite constant. Twice ‘in’ is used, for Judaea (1 Thes. ii. 14), and Asia (Apoc. i. 4): while in each case the form used can be readily accounted for by the accompanying words which rendered the use of ‘in’ the only natural mode of designation, . . . In all other (six) cases, however, these plural designations of a plurality of *Ecclesiae* are designated by a genitive of the region; the *Ecclesiae* of Judaea, Gal. i. 22; of Asia, 1 Cor. xvi. 19; of Galatia, 1 Cor. xvi. 1 and the salutation to the Galatians; of Macedonia, 2 Cor. viii. 1; of the nations or Gentiles generally (τῶν ἐθνῶν), Rom. xvi. 4. In these collective instances the simple and convenient genitive could lead to no misunderstanding. But we find no instance of such a form as ‘the *Ecclesia* of Ephesus’ (a city) or ‘the *Ecclesia* of Galatia’ (a region).” “No circumstances had yet arisen,” adds Hort, “which could give propriety to such a form of speech.” But can circumstances ever arise which will give propriety to it? The name “Church of England” (or “English Church”) can no more be justified than “Lutheran Church,” “Presbyterian Church,” “Baptist Church.”

<sup>15</sup> The same result is reached if we consider the figure of the body as it is used by St. Paul to explain the nature of the Church and the character of its organization. In 1 Cor. 12: 27 he says ἡμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ

ever aim at representing *Church* organization, the organization of the universal congregation, the *Ecclesia*.

But—the *Ecclesia* as a whole is incapable of legal organization.

μέλη ἐκ μέρους. He calls the Corinthian congregation "Christ's body," and the individuals are Christ's members, each "in his part" (R. V. marg.). As Christ has but *one* body (ἐν σῶμα, 1 Cor. 12:12) the Corinthian congregation is not "*a* body of Christ" (so Hort, pp. 145 sq.), but *the* body of Christ: each individual congregation represents the *Ecclesia*, the whole of Christendom. Only so is it intelligible that the Apostle, in immediate connection with the above quoted words, speaks of the organization of the whole church (v. 28): "And God hath set some in the Church (τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ), first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers," etc., in order to exhibit the principles of organization which characterized the congregation at Corinth, just as he applies the same image again to the congregation at Rome (Rom. 12:4 sq.). The individual congregation is not to be distinguished from the universal congregation of Christ's people; it is what it is only as a manifestation of the whole Church, and it is organized—as the Apostle Paul explains in the case of Rome and Corinth similarly—with *the organization of the whole congregation of God*, by the partition of the spiritual gifts which are bestowed upon the *Ecclesia*. — From this we may see that there is no discrepancy, nor even any essential difference, between the application of the figure of the body as St. Paul uses it in his earlier epistles and in Ephesians and Colossians. Some difference there is, of course: in the latter case the Church is spoken of absolutely, without reference to this or that local congregation. But it is not as though we had here a novel point of view, which suggests a different author, or obliges us to suppose a change of doctrine on St. Paul's part, namely, that he had left behind him an earlier conception of the Church as a particular local society (or congeries of such societies) and risen to the abstract idea of the *whole* Church. In the first place, "the Church" of Ephesians and Colossians is not a mere abstraction (a heavenly reality which transcends human conditions, like the "Jerusalem which is above," Gal. 4:26); and no more is "the Church" of the earlier epistles merely a concrete society. Enough has already been said to make it clear that the Church in Corinth, the Church in Cenchreae, or wherever it might be, is nothing less than the Church universal; and "the Church" that is spoken of in Ephesians and Colossians can be no more. A certain difference in the application of the figure of the body is due to the fact that in the earlier epistles the motive was a practical one, to enforce the obligations of the members to one another; while in Ephesians and Colossians the motive was doctrinal, to explain the relation of the members to the head. What is new in these later epistles is not the idea of one universal *Ecclesia*, nor

## § 10, THE IDEA OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

The Ecclesia, the body of Christ, the bride of the Lord, is a spiritual entity, transcending the norms of human societies — among others the norm of law.

Yet for all this the Ecclesia is not an invisible and ineffectual ideal, floating vaguely above the earth. On the contrary, it is composed of human members; it is visible and effectual in all assembles of Christendom; — yes, and even in the spiritual gifts which are bestowed upon individual Christians as their call and equipment for service in and for the body of Christ. The Ecclesia is *organized*, — not only as a matter of fact, but as the express realization of its ideal. So much is clear from the image of the body. The body of Christ has its organs, but it is impossible that its organization be of a legal nature.

The description of the Church in terms of a living organism — the body — can hardly be claimed as favorable to the idea of *legal* organization. The figure, indeed, is commonly applied to civil states; but even in this application it is properly used to explain the *natural* relation of the members to one another, and it is only by a certain violence that it can be employed to justify a formal or legal constitution. The application of this

the conception of the singularity and unity of that body of which Christ is head; but the apostle's mature appreciation of Christ's headship over the creation, of which the Ecclesia is the prime mystery and revelation. Hort observes justly (p. 147): "In 'Ephesians' and Colossians the change comes not so much [better, *not at all*] by an expansion or extension of the thought of each local Ecclesia as a body over a wider sphere as by way of corollary or application, so to speak, of larger and deeper thoughts on the place of Christ in the universal economy of things, antecedent not only to the Incarnation but to the whole course of the world."

figure in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians absolutely excludes the notion of a legal constitution. There all is made to depend upon the *head*.<sup>1</sup> The head of the Church is Christ (God): all power and authority in the Church is from him, and must be exercised *in his name*. Is it possible that a legal clause can decide whose utterance must be taken as God's voice for the Church? The incongruity between law and the Church is not to be found so much in the forcible execution of its precepts (which is not to be accounted of the essence of positive law), but rather in the *formality* which is of the very nature of law, — that is to say, in the fact that it is grounded upon a definite occurrence of the *past*, and is thus superior to criticism and in a measure indifferent to the question whether in the present moment it appears substantially justified or not. Is it possible there can be any law which might require the congregation to accept a particular decision as God's decision? Is it possible that a particular teaching must count for God's teaching because the teacher, it may be, was some while ago legally elected or otherwise formally installed? When once it is certain that God's word alone must rule in the Church, and not man's, then is it equally certain that there can be no official position or privilege involving a *legal* authority over against the congregation. The word of God is recognized not by any formal criterion, but by its inherent power. Christendom (the Ecclesia) has only to follow that word which it recognizes by free inward consent as the word of God. It renders obedience only to the word which is *substantially* justified, which issues in truth from the

<sup>1</sup> Col. 2 : 19, "not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together by the joints and bands," etc. Also Col. 1 : 18; Ephes. 1 : 22; 4 : 15; cf. 1 Cor. 11 : 3.



Spirit of God. *There can be no exercise of legal rule in the Ecclesia.*

The organic constitution of the Ecclesia is the organism of Christ's body; the life of the Ecclesia is the life and active influence of Christ. Is it conceivable that resolutions can be passed in human fashion about the organic constitution of the Ecclesia, or that the organization of the Church can in any wise be determined by the measure of an outward and formal criterion? It is the word of God which must decide the organic constitution of Christendom. Even for the outward order of the Church—the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the constitution of offices, the appointment of officers, etc.—it is the *divine* word which is directly or indirectly decisive. The doctrine of Church order must be a part of the exposition and teaching of the word of God—it is a διδαχή. The teaching of God's word includes an ethical doctrine as well as a theological—the doctrine of *Christian* morals. And upon this ethical doctrine, drawn from divine revelation, depends the doctrine of Church order. Fundamentally it is a moral law which prescribes, not only the ethical life and conduct of the individual, but the life and organization of the Ecclesia as well. With this, all thought of legislation for the Church in the sense of positive law is excluded. In the place of legislation stands doctrine—the *doctrine of Christ's word*—which must render an answer to questions about the life and organization of Christendom, and *does render it*. *There can be no legal organization and no legal legislative authority in the Ecclesia.*

D. In this sense the Apostle Paul instructs the Romans and Corinthians about the divinely ordered constitution of the



Church through the partition of spiritual gifts — *charismata*, Rom. 12:3 sqq., 1 Cor. 12:14; and the Corinthians about the proper celebration of the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:23 sqq. Likewise his precepts about purely outward conduct in the congregational assemblies — the covering or uncovering of the head in prayer (1 Cor. 11), the orderly conduct of meetings for instruction (1 Cor. 14) — are given as “the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37); and hence his precepts about such things as are external, but relevant to the Church, are part of his “doctrine” about right conduct “in Christ” — *τὰς ὁδοὺς μου ἐν Χριστῷ, καθὼς πανταχοῦ ἐν πάσῃ ἐκκλησίᾳ διδάσκω* (1 Cor. 4:17, cf. 11:2). See further, § 15. There is, it is true, a difference to be observed here. The Apostle recognizes that controversy is possible in respect to such outward precepts as rest upon no direct word of the Lord, — though there must ever be *one* solution which alone entirely corresponds with the mind of Christ. In such cases St. Paul regards the *uniform* custom in all the Churches as a determining consideration: — “we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God,” 1 Cor. 11:16; “as in all the Churches of the saints,” 14:33. The traditional usage of the Christian Churches he accounts a circumstance of importance, and not only does he ordain the same regulations for all the congregations of his founding (1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17), but he takes care that the order established in his Churches shall correspond with that observed in the rest of Christendom. On the one hand his fundamental thought is this, that the constitution and order of the congregation, since it is the order of the body of Christ, — that is, Christendom, — must be accounted in all its parts a divinely designed order (“for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace,” 1 Cor. 14:33), and therefore that there can be only *one* solution — alike consequently for all congregations — which corresponds fully with the sense of the divine ordinance: on the other hand his thought is, that the spirit of Christ prompts to love, and hence to subjection to one another in “lowliness of mind” (see especially Phil. 2:1–11; cf. note 27) and — so far as no divine command interferes — to agreement upon such ordinances as others have found convenient, leading thus

to similarity even in the outward conduct of life (1 Cor. 10 : 32, 33). It is evident also that only a part of the ecclesiastical regime was grounded by the apostle directly upon a word of the Lord : other questions of outward order are resolved only *indirectly* by God's word — chiefly by bringing to bear the general obligation of brotherly love. *This distinction was early given up, and thereby the way was prepared for Catholicism.* Even before the end of the first century the thought which we encounter already in St. Paul's teaching — namely, a regard for tradition, founded upon the consideration that only *one* ecclesiastical order *fully* corresponds to the divine word — was given a radically different turn, to the effect that the *whole* ecclesiastical order as it was settled by tradition was to be regarded as resting *immediately* upon God's word, and therefore that the *whole doctrine* of the outward order of the Church was directly derived from the word of God given by Christ through his apostles. In this sense the epistle of the Roman Church to the Corinthians (1 Clement, c. 42–44) refers the whole traditional order of congregational government — particularly the relation of the congregational officers to the celebration of the Eucharist — directly to a divine ordinance given by Christ through his Apostles (42 : 1, 2). In the same sense “*The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles*” (about A. D. 100) treats not only of Christian morals (in the narrower sense in which we understand the word), but also of congregational order and worship — see Harnack, *Prolegomena*, pp. 24 sq. So also the later *Διδασκαλία τῶν ἀποστόλων* and other pseudo-apostolic writings. Thus arose the view which is still maintained by the Catholic Church, that the whole traditional Church order is of apostolic origin — hence of divine institution, since it is derived ultimately from Christ himself — and that therefore the *whole* Church order *as such* constitutes a part of the *moral law* as divinely instituted, and also that the whole Church order is an essential and inseparable constituent of Christian faith and doctrine — which necessarily includes ethics. On this historical basis rests the maxim which still holds good in the Catholic Church, that the fundamental *legal principles* of Church government are at the same time *articles of*

*faith.* The first practical deduction which was drawn from this, and one which since the end of the first century has had a profound influence upon the whole development of Church government, is the principle that *uniformity* in external order as well as in doctrine is an essential condition of the unity of the Church, and so, for the individual congregation, is an essential requisite for community with Christendom. *The Christianity of the congregation — its community in the Ecclesia — was made to depend upon questions of external order and government.* It is in this sense Tertullian says (*Apolog.* c. 39), *Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spe foedere* :—the unity of Christendom rests not only upon the like faith and the like hope (so Ephes. 4 : 4–6), but also upon the like ecclesiastical order, *disciplinae unitas*. So the Roman presbytery writes to Cyprian (Cyprian, *epist.* 30 : 1), *omnes eadem censurae et disciplinae consensione sociati*; and Cyprian himself (*epist.* 25), *ut apud omnes unus actus* (in relation to the discipline of the lapsed) *et una consensio secundum Domini praecepta teneatur*. The requisition of unity even in matters of discipline and the outward ordering of congregational life was made an indispensable condition. Already in the second century this occasioned the conflict with Montanism and the Easter controversy — not to mention other instances. The behavior of Victor, the Roman bishop, his excommunication of the Christians of Asia Minor on account of their practice of celebrating Easter at a different season, is only to be accounted for by a point of view which regards dogma and discipline as of equal value for the unity of the Church. The full significance of this point of view for the history of the Church can be understood only from the whole exposition of the subject which is given in Sohm's work. One may assert that the development of Catholic organization as a whole has been conditioned by it. Everywhere we find Catholicism attaching itself to the primitive idea, but always perverting its meaning. According to primitive doctrine (that of the Apostle Paul) the whole order of the Ecclesia is indeed regulated by God's commandment, but still in large part only so far as the commandment of brotherly love forbids opposition to current Church practice. After

the end of the first century the traditional practice of the Church was regarded in itself as binding, because it was valued as the witness for the direct divine — “apostolic” — institution of all parts of Church discipline. So soon as tradition had acquired this significance the theory of the Catholic *jure divino* organization was complete. The first and fundamental thought, however, of this development is that Church order and organization is an order and organization of the *Ecclesia* as the body of Christ, — which so far is the primitive doctrine expounded above in the text. — The whole of this note is from Sohm, n. 2 to p. 23.

The veritable apostolic doctrine, drawn from God’s Word, is this: *that the organization of the Ecclesia is not a legal but a charismatic organization.*

Christendom has Christ for its head, for its members the individual Christians. As the human body has various members for various services, so also the body of Christendom has *various* members, which are called to *various* functions, and consequently to various positions in the congregation. Christendom is organized through the impartation of spiritual gifts (*charismata*), which are at once an equipment of individual Christians for a special activity in the *Ecclesia*, and a *call* to such service.<sup>2</sup> The *charisma* is from God: so also the service to which it calls<sup>3</sup> is a service imposed by God, — in this sense a God-given office, and indeed an office in the service of the *Ecclesia*, not of this or that local congregation.

The impartation of the *charismata* furnishes the Church with a *God-given organization*. This means that there is *not* an abstract uniformity and equality among all the adherents to Christianity. It excludes the ato-

<sup>2</sup> This fundamental line of thought St. Paul develops in Rom. 12 : 3-8, and 1 Cor. cc. 12-14.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 12 : 4-6, 11 ; 1 Pet. 4 : 10.



mistic way of regarding the Church as composed of so many like units which, having the same character, have also the same rights and need only to be *counted*. On the contrary, it means superiority and subordination, and at that a divinely intended superiority and subordination, according as God has bestowed upon each the endowments which are requisite for service in the body of Christ. The charisma of each individual claims recognition on the part of the other brethren ; and in so far as it constitutes a call to a guiding, leading, or administrative activity in the Ecclesia, it exacts *obedience*.<sup>4</sup> So also even the government of the Ecclesia is the exercise of a charisma, which betokens a divine call to a position of rule.

But — the obedience which the charisma claims as its due cannot be such as is exacted by formal legislation, but only *free* obedience, an obedience which is engendered by the conviction that it is rendered actually to the will of God expressed through the medium of the spiritually endowed disciple. The charismatic organization can be realized only on the assumption that the spiritual endowment and call to any function or activity in the congregation is *freely recognized* by the other members, — a recognition and consent which can be born only of love. Hence it is that nothing is said of legal obligation : but, it is said, “*the greatest is love*.” For the operation of all the charismata, for the very life of the body of Christ, love is indispensable. The lofty praise of love which the apostle chants in the thir-

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 16 : 15, 16, — “The house of Stephanas have set themselves to minister unto the saints,” *therefore* the Apostle exhorts, “that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth.” Cf. 1 Thes. 5 : 12, 13, and Heb. 13 : 17. 1 Clem. *ad Cor.* 38 : 1, ὑποτασσέσθω ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καθὼς καὶ ἐτέθη ἐν τῷ χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ.



teenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians has chiefly in view, as the context shows,<sup>5</sup> the love which is manifested in the *congregational* life, the love which prompts the free employment of one's own charisma in the service of the Church, and the no less ready subordination of oneself to the special charismatic endowments of others, — "that there be no schism in the body." The obedience which is due the charisma, and in fact all subordination in the Church, is, as the Apostle Paul here most emphatically testifies, *a duty of love and not of law*. It is likewise to be understood that this obedience is a duty which is owed to God, and not specifically to him who exercises the charisma. The very thought of claiming superiority or exacting subordination on formal grounds is therewith rendered impossible.

It was not merely the expectation of the speedy end of the world that excluded in the early age all thought of the establishment of an external order on this earth, a legal organization devised for permanence. No, it belongs to the very ideal of Christendom: the requisition which this ideal makes of the Ecclesia is, that there shall be no legal organization! How could one even think of giving to Christendom, to the body of Christ, the organization of a secular society with its council of elders, archons, etc.! Christendom lives upon its trust in Christ who guides and conducts it. He will also awaken in his congregation the gift of government. One gift, one charisma, there is to which is intrusted

<sup>5</sup> The 13th cap. of 1 Cor. stands between the two (12th and 14th) which expressly deal with the problem of order in the Ecclesia. It shows "the more excellent way," the power which stands highest in the Ecclesia, — higher than the charismata, — the power of love. Without love all the spiritual gifts profit nothing. Love prompts the right use of the charismata, and at the same time renders effectual their operation in Christendom as concordant functions of a well compacted body.

the conduct of the congregation, the government of the Church in Christ's name : *the gift of teaching* (see § 15).

E. The lively discussion which has followed Sohm's work in Germany deals chiefly, as might be expected, with the fundamental question which he raises as to the relation of law to the Church. Most of Sohm's critics deny his thesis that law is incompatible with the very idea of the Ecclesia — that there can be no legal organization of the Ecclesia — without attempting to invalidate the historical proofs upon which he founds it. This attempt to vindicate the legitimacy of law in the Church is to be regarded not so much as an apology for the existing order — in the Lutheran Church or any other — as an anxious maintenance of a condition which is presumed essential to any order whatsoever. It is conceded that *some conceptions* of law, or perhaps the application of law of any sort to *some spheres* of Christian life (such as faith and doctrine), may be contrary to the nature of the Church. But, it is said, all depends upon what we mean by "law."

So says Kahl (*Lehrsystem des Kirchenrechts*, 1894, p. 73), who is commonly regarded as the ablest of Sohm's critics, and who has certainly made the most acute analysis of the idea of law in relation to the Church. And it does seem as if one had only to feel about, and be sure to find sooner or later *some sense* in which law — or *some sort* of law — might be compatible with the idea of the Ecclesia. It seems as if some way there must be to modify the absoluteness of Sohm's denial: "No legal organization for the Ecclesia." So I thought myself, and so one is likely to think until the historical facts which Sohm adduces have had time to make their due impression, — so new is the notion that the Church, even as a society of men in this world (that is, the "visible Church"), cannot be subjected to the norm of a purely human and secular society.

But a careful study of Kahl's argument is likely to disabuse one of this expectation, — and all the more, the more clearly we recognize its acuteness. Kahl complains (p. 77) that Sohm nowhere gives an exhaustive account of the nature of law, but introduces it from the beginning as a thing which is self-

evidently opposed to the spiritual nature of the Church. But after all, positive law is a very definite conception, and one does not need an exhaustive account of it to understand what it is in its essential nature. In recognizing that compulsion — effective sanction — is not essential to the idea of law, and in laying the whole stress upon the *formal* nature of law (see above, p. 142), Sohm certainly takes the word in a very general sense — I believe the most general sense possible. Kahl does not attempt to invalidate this definition of law, and I can see no pertinence in his remark on p. 77, that formality is not an *exclusive* characteristic of law. Neither is it pertinent to observe (pp. 52, 53) that the *actions* to which morality and religion prompt may properly be made the subject of law; for, though of course morality and religion themselves, as affairs of the heart, *cannot* be legally enforced, it is not claimed that the actions corresponding even to Christian morality and religion may not be made the object of enforcement in any civil society; but only that the Ecclesia — I do not say should not, but — *cannot* be subjected to a legal norm.

It is true, the Church is a society of men among men, and it may seem as if, to maintain the stability or preserve the very existence of the Church, legal means must be used to enforce the obligations of Christian morality and religion. But a legal constitution *cannot* be applied to the Church. Any company of Christians *can*, with intent to legalize the Church, constitute a secular society and consent to subject themselves to the laws which the majority may see fit to impose: but what is thereby legalized and fortified is not the Church, but a surrogate for the Church, namely, a *denomination*. The greater or fewer number of adherents does not affect at all the essence of what we call denominationalism; that it is a particular or local manifestation of Christianity (one among many) is not essential to the notion: the Church of England is a denomination, the Roman Church is a denomination, so is every legalized Christian society which claims to represent the Church, and the aspiration after what is improperly called the “corporate” reunion of Christendom is commonly an aspiration after a universal denomination. *Absit!* Better a thousand denominations

than one! But the Church (Ecclesia) evades the meshes of legal organization, since it is effectually constituted wherever two or three disciples are gathered together in the name of the Lord, — a condition which no legal (formal) criterion can ever determine.

Practically, this is what Kahl pleads for: a legalized denomination, not a legalized Church. He gives an exhaustive explanation of the nature of law in its relation to the Church (pp. 67 sq.), but in conclusion he reaches a definition of law which is more self-evidently opposed to the nature of the Church — if the idea presented above in the last two sections is a right one — than is the more general and abstract definition which Sohm posits. He says (p. 79): "The nature of the legal function is that it makes the *will of the whole* effective in respect to particular *conduct*." "The will of the whole" (*der Gesamtheit*) can practically mean nothing else than the will of the plurality, or of a legally defined majority. But in the Church it is not the will of the whole which counts, but only the will of God. How can the vote of a legal majority determine what is the will of God with respect to the conduct of the Ecclesia?

Kahl concedes that law is not contained in the idea of the Church, but he argues that it is not *excluded* (p. 68). It is only the visible Church which can be thought of as having any relation to law. But it is not maintained that even the visible Church requires a legal organization as an ideal necessity, but only that it has an aptitude to receive it, if practical necessity requires it (pp. 67, 69, 74, 75). This practical necessity, however, does not always and everywhere exist in the same measure, nor require the same degree of legal exaction. It sometimes does not exist at all. As a matter of fact, the apostolic Church had no legal constitution, because it required none (pp. 69, 75). Law corresponds to the imperfection of the Church: it is excluded from the ideal of the perfect Church (pp. 53, 75). In any case, there are some spheres of ecclesiastical life to which it may not be applied — particularly the sphere of doctrine or teaching.

The weakness of Kahl's position is revealed when we discover that in the last analysis he has not justified the legalization of the visible Church, but only the constitution of another



body which he expressly discriminates from it and calls the "legal Church" (pp. 69 sq.). He says: "The one (the visible Church) rests upon divine institution, the other (the legal Church) upon the justification (*Folgerichtigkeit*) of human development. In the visible Church the solidarity of the members reposes upon the true use and appropriation of Word and Sacrament through the Holy Ghost — and upon that alone. The solidarity of the legal Church is constituted merely by the fact of the social contract of union by the members. A double consequence may be deduced from this: in the first place, not all the members even of the true visible Church need necessarily stand within the legal Church; in the second place, many who are bound together in the legal Church may still remain outside the visible Church, because (and in so far as) they lack the principle of unity which depends upon the true dispensation of Word and Sacrament. Both consequences are impossible from the Catholic stand-point, because visible and legal Church are according to that conception the same." So then, members of the visible Church are not necessarily members of the invisible, and *vice versa*; also, members of the legal Church are not necessarily members of the visible Church (still less of the invisible), and *vice versa*. It would be difficult to avoid the consequence that we have here three Churches, and not merely three aspects of the Church. To such an end as this we are brought by the attempt to elude the force of Sohm's claim, that there can be no legal organization of the Ecclesia.

The distinction between the visible and invisible Church, as it is commonly held, has done woful injury; but the doctrine of the legal Church is tenfold more pernicious. This notion is not altogether novel in Germany (see v. Scheurl, *Die geistliche und die rechtliche Kirche*, 1861), and it is new to us only as a *formula*. The thing itself is what we know as denominationalism, and the formula is the expression of the denominational principle. In reality there can be no legal Church, but only a legal *denomination* — a surrogate for the Church. We have the invisible, the visible, and the legal Church; but how can we call this society in the third remove from the Ecclesia "a Church" without depotentiating the name?



This is in effect what Kahl does. The first of his three principal objections against the argument of Sohm—that he gives no exhaustive account of the nature of law—we have already considered; the second is here in point, namely, that “he identifies the Church and the Kingdom of God.” This criticism, even if it be just, is not much to the point: the identification of the Church and the Kingdom is not essential to Sohm’s argument, and in my exposition of the subject I have taken pains not to seem to confound the two ideas. But Kahl’s own view is not far removed from this. The visible Church in its perfect or ideal state can and must dispense with law (p. 80), and stands at no great remove from the Kingdom. But the Church as it is at present is imperfect; it is a distant approximation of the Kingdom—it is the Kingdom in process of becoming. The legal Church again, just in so far as legalism more or less prevails in it, is a more or less distant approximation of the true Church visible. What a gap there is here between the Kingdom and the legal Church! Can the name Church be further depotentiated? If practical necessity demands law, let it frankly be recognized as the law of a denomination, not the law of the Church, nor of a Church.

We *must* resort to law,—so it is said. Yet we cannot fail to remark the impotence of law to accomplish the end at which it aims: it aims at establishing legalized unity and uniformity, it has accomplished legalized separation and divergency. It has defeated its own aim, and it *must* defeat it, though many still fatuously trust in law to reverse the process and break down the divisions that it has created. The denominations are wounds in the body of Christ which have been created by law and never will be cured by it. I am aware that there are still many who would justify denominationalism;—and that is the only way to justify law in the Ecclesia. Kahl tries unsuccessfully to prove (pp. 79 sq.) that legal exaction is not incompatible with the free operation of the one divine principle of unity and conformity in the Ecclesia; namely, meek subjection to one another in the spirit of brotherly love. But, granted this were true within the limits of a single denomination, it manifestly is not true as between one denomination and another. De-

nominalism, in so far as it hinders the free exercise of brotherly love as between the members of the *whole* Church, and so discards the one factor which is able to effect peace, unity, concord; in so far as it claims the services of the disciples of Christ not for the Ecclesia, but for the denomination; in so far as it banishes the whole practical idea of the Church catholic, and eliminates the motive which prompts the members to act upon a principle fit always to be law universal for the Ecclesia of God; in that degree it constitutes verily "a schism of the body." I say again: better many wounds of the body than one deadly wound; better many schisms than one great schism — one universal tyranny of law successfully imposed upon all in the name of God. But better far "that there be no schism of the body."

Those who recognize that denominationalism is inconsistent with the idea of the Ecclesia may profitably reflect upon the fact that it was established and is now maintained by *law*. The dream of one universal denomination has never been fulfilled, the Ecclesia as a whole has never been legally organized. There is one cure for denominationalism, which, though it is purely theoretical, and must appear utterly paradoxical, is well worth considering. Let denominationalism (legalized Christianity) proceed (not in the direction at which it aims, but in that towards which it inevitably tends) to the utmost limit of separation; let it divide and redivide till it reaches the unit of the Church, the individual, till it leaves no two Christians in one denomination, but each a denomination by himself; — and at once there is no longer any denomination, the social compact which creates the law is dissolved, and each member of Christ finds himself simply and immediately a member of the Ecclesia, subject to no law but that which by the illumination of the Holy Ghost he recognizes as the law of God for the whole Ecclesia.

There remains to consider only the first of Kahl's three points of criticism (p. 74): he retorts upon Sohm that he himself treats one sort of organization as a *law* for the Church in all ages, — namely, the charismatic organization of the Apostolic Age. Even as a retort this is not well founded. It is not because the

apostolic Church was actually so organized, that this must be the only organization always for the Ecclesia. At this point Sohm lays the chief stress, not upon the historical development, but upon a doctrinal thesis. There is, to be sure, nothing strange nor unreasonable in the belief that the organization of the apostolic Church was as such normative for the Church in subsequent generations ; — at the very least it is a factor which cannot be ignored. It is not, however, by conforming to the spirit of apostolic organization, but by slavishly copying its details, that it is made a *legal* norm. But in the last resort, the reason why a charismatic organization is the only admissible organization, is the fact that it is the only organization which is consistent with the *nature* of the Ecclesia. This is the point which Sohm presses with the utmost vigor. It is not merely that law is “not included” in the idea of the Ecclesia, it is positively *excluded* by it. It is not pertinent to press the plea that there is a practical necessity for legal organization: the conclusion which we have reached is, not that it is inexpedient, but that it is *impossible* to impose a legal organization upon the Ecclesia. The legal Church (“*rechtliche Kirche*”) as such is not an Ecclesia, and its law is not ecclesiastical law but denominational law. This law lacks the power to effect what it aims to effect, for it has *no ecclesiastical sanction*, but only a denominational sanction: it can neither admit to the Ecclesia (even the visible Ecclesia), nor exclude from it. The legal Church is not an *effective* surrogate for the Ecclesia. It is another society which stands over against the Ecclesia and is fundamentally indifferent to it, — except as it pretends to represent it.

## § 11, SIGNIFICANCE OF ORDER AND CUSTOM IN THE CHURCH

It may at first appear as though Sohm's argument were designed to prove the impossibility of effecting or maintaining any order or organization in the Ecclesia — especially any uniform order. This of course is not

the case, as even the preceding section will suffice to show. Order and organization are ends which are perfectly compatible with the idea of the Ecclesia,—nay, more, they are positively requisite to the fulfilment of it. Visible unity, as it is manifested in uniformity of organization and conformity of custom, is an ideal which belongs essentially and *peculiarly* to the Ecclesia; and the better the true nature of the Ecclesia is understood, so much the more is one prompted to pursue this end. The ideal of the Ecclesia exacts *conformity*—conformity not only to precedent local custom in the individual Church, but, among all the Churches of God, to universal custom:—conformity in things essential, as a matter of course, out of obedience to the express command of God; but likewise in things relatively indifferent, merely for the sake of conformity, and of the peace and unity which ensues from it. These ends are consonant with the idea of the Ecclesia, only—*they are not to be attained by legal means.*

With this it may seem as though the ends themselves were prohibited, for we are not used to think of any other means to compass them but law. And yet, what are the means we do in practice constantly rely upon to effect, if not to maintain, the ends of uniform order and organization? What is the motive to which we appeal to effect the laws themselves? to insure a majority vote for such ordinances as shall not prove unendurable to the minority? What force do we rely upon to bring about the concord which law merely registers and—it is supposed—maintains? For instance, to take an extreme and unfavorable case: We dream of effecting the unity of Christendom by breaking down the legal walls of partition erected about the separate denominations, and including all



again under a common law. The difficulties which have to be overcome are confessedly great, and all the greater because the differences are formulated in terms of law. Great sacrifices of personal pride and prejudice are demanded, and they are the greater because they are exacted in favor of a *new law*. Law itself cannot produce this concord, law alone cannot maintain it; and neither within the denominations nor without them (in the state) is there nowadays any force which can compel uniformity. These great sacrifices must be free sacrifices, and there is but one force which can prompt them, namely, brotherly love — or, more specifically, *meekness*, an ideal which is highly characteristic of the New Testament, and which denotes the readiness to subordinate one's own profit and preference to the weal of others in a spirit of humble service.

F. Above, in note D, Sohm properly lays stress upon love as the bond of peace and order in the congregation; but it is still more important to observe the operation of *meekness*, which is the most characteristic aspect of love in the Christian sense, and is here peculiarly in point as the specific cure of social disorder in the Ecclesia. The popular idea of meekness represents it as the least attractive of virtues, — in fact, as the only repellent virtue, and consequently no proper virtue at all, since it does not awaken a response in the conscience. A certain mealy-mouthed hypocrisy clings to our conception of this word, but this is due to an age-long misinterpretation of its meaning. It does not mean primarily a lowly *opinion* of oneself in comparison with God or with one's fellows; it means no thinking of oneself at all, or of all that one finds within oneself to humble one, but on the contrary a thinking of others (Phil. 2: 4) with complete abstraction of egoistic regards. According to St. Bernard the meek man is he who *verissima sui agnitione sibi ipse vilescat*. With this definition the great monk profoundly impressed not only the character of monasticism, but



of medieval piety in general; and our modern piety still feels his influence. In reality, however, meekness is not a product of self-examination, but the expression of self-abnegation: it means not a *notion* about oneself, but a recognition of the actual *position* in which we stand with relation to our fellow men; namely, the position of a servant, which we have willingly assumed or cheerfully endure. Only as we practically *realize* this relation of service, ignoring our own advantage — even the highest, the saving of our souls (Matt. 16: 25; cf. Rom. 9: 3) — for the sake of others, can we show meekness without hypocrisy, endure offences without feeling affront, and fulfil the impossible injunction of St. Paul (Phil. 2: 3), to count others better than ourselves — not, to be sure, as the result of a critical comparison of respective moral worth, but as the natural expression of the attitude of a true servant toward him whose welfare he accounts the end to which his own private ends are subordinated and in view of which he regards even his very existence as merely a means.

The meaning of this significant word is to be understood only from a study of its history in the Old Testament. The two words 'אֲנִי and אֲנִי (rendered consistently by “poor” and “meek” in our Revised Version) are so closely related that they are frequently used in the same connection and sometimes almost interchangeably. Israel's belief in God as the righteous judge, the vindicator of the oppressed and restorer of the perverted equities of human life, involved the recognition of a peculiarly close relation between God and the poor. “*Because I am poor, God is my helper,*” is a thought which is implied again and again in the Psalms. For instance, in the last verse of the 40th Psalm these two clauses stand without any expressed relation: “But I am poor and needy; the Lord thinketh upon me.” Our English versions supply “yet” or an equivalent expression, as though it were natural for God to notice the lofty, but strange that he should have respect unto the lowly: whereas the theology of Israel implies on the contrary a “*therefore.*” On the other hand, the poor were observed to be fitted by their very poverty, and by the sense of their helplessness, for trust in God and the attitude of humble service which

he demands. So, from a theory about the character of God and from observation of the character of men, it became a settled maxim in Israel that God and the poor stand in a peculiar relation to one another, — of protection on his part, and of trust and obedience upon theirs.

To this use of *עני* — the poor — in the Old Testament the use of *ננץ* — the meek — closely corresponds: it differs from it only in laying stress upon the ethical disposition which is the accompaniment of poverty, rather than upon the state of poverty itself; but there is no word in the Old Testament to represent the abstract noun meekness, and it is doubtful if it was thought of as a character which might exist apart from lowliness of station.

In the Septuagint the Greek words *πτωχός* — poor — and *πραΰς* — meek — are used respectively to translate these two Hebrew terms, and in the New Testament too they precisely correspond, — except that the latter word more distinctly denotes an abstract virtue, though the notion of actual poverty and lowliness is never foreign to it.

The Old Testament idea culminated in the conception of the meek and suffering servant of Jehovah — primarily denoting Israel, and typically the Messiah. Jesus exhibited the perfect fulfilment of this prophetic type. The lowliness of his birth and subsequent position in society, and still more the yoke of service which he voluntarily assumed, marked him as one who “came not to be ministered unto but to minister,” even to the giving away of his life (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). It is remarkable that St. Paul alludes to no other personal trait of Jesus but this alone, beseeching the Corinthians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:1). The essential note of Jesus’ manifestation St. Paul sees in the fact that he took “the form of a servant.” It is characteristic of St. Paul that he regarded the lowliness of mind which was in Christ Jesus as a trait which was exhibited not so much in his human life as in his Incarnation, — or rather in the whole fact of his descent from the right hand of God to the limit of human shame, the cross.

Jesus himself called attention to the meekness and lowliness

of heart which was exhibited in his own person, exhorting his disciples to learn this trait of him (Matt. 11 : 29). He also recognized that his mission in the world was especially to the poor and meek. The first verses of the 61st chapter of Isaiah which he read in the Synagogue at Nazareth were selected expressly as the program of his Messianic ministry (Luke 4 : 16 sq.):

“The spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he appointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

In the literal fulfilment of this program he doubtless found assurance of his own Messiahship, and to the disciples of John who come to him to demand if he be indeed the Messiah, he offers this as the proof (Luke 7 : 18–23; Matt. 11 : 2–6): “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them.” It would seem as though Jesus’ message of comfort and good tidings was addressed to the poor almost exclusively. In Luke 6 : 20–26 he draws a formal contrast between the poor and the rich: “Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God. . . . But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. . . .” The Beatitudes in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel are addressed to the poor and lowly and oppressed. Verse 5 is an echo of the 37th Psalm, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth;” and the very point of this Beatitude lies in the fact that “the meek” signifies those who are actually poor, whom the rich have expropriated. But it is no less important to remark the turn which is given to the expression in verse 3: “Blessed are the *poor in spirit*.” Here we have suggested at least the possibility that the spirit of humble service which is natural to the poor may be acquired — though it be with difficulty — by others. Hence, despite the enormous difficulty, it is possible even for the rich to enter into the Kingdom of God (Matt. 19 : 24; Mark 10 : 25; Luke 18 : 25).

This word of Jesus justifies the common use in the epistles of the abstract noun "meekness" — *πραΰτης*. Still more significant, perhaps, is the other abstract term *ταπεινοφροσύνη* — "lowliness of mind." The concrete noun *ταπεινός* denotes one who actually, and generally of necessity, occupies a lowly position: the abstract noun denotes — not, to be sure, a lowly opinion of oneself — but such an attitude of mind as corresponds with the position of humble service which one has either cheerfully accepted or willingly assumed. What we call in our Communion Office the "Comfortable Words" of Jesus were addressed expressly to those "that labor and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28-30). In themselves, however, labor and heavy laden poverty are not blessings, they become such only as they develop an aptness trustfully to accept Christ's message and faithfully to perform his service. Furthermore, it is only by *exchanging* one's own yoke for Christ's — the heavy burden of selfish service, for the service of others which in experience is found light — that one finds rest for the soul. And when Jesus here describes himself as "meek and lowly *in heart*" (*ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ*), requiring of his disciples the same ethical character; it is evident that he means a disposition of mind which may be thought of, and may exist, apart from the actual condition of poverty, — one which is easy for the poor and difficult for the rich, yet *possible* for all. In any case, as an affair of the heart, it must be a glad service and a willing one. As a trait that is to be learned from Jesus himself, it is manifestly not the monkish *humilitas* which is the expression of the consciousness of sin, and the consequent mean opinion of oneself.

Here we have the conception of a virtue which above all others is effective and necessary for the maintenance of order and conformity in the Church; and, as a matter of fact, the words "meekness" and "lowliness of mind" are used by St. Paul with reference especially to threatened disorder and non-conformity, whether in the individual congregation or in the Church at large. In Gal. 5:23 and 1 Tim. 6:11 the word "meekness" occurs simply in a list of the principal Christian virtues. In 2 Tim. 2:25 and 1 Cor. 4:21 it is mentioned as



a special requisite for the official minister ("God's servant"), and it was plainly an indispensable requisite in the apostolic Church where obedience had to be *conciliated*, for lack of any law to enforce it. This, however, is a virtue which is required no less in the ruled than in the rulers, and in 2 Cor. 10:1 St. Paul's adjuration, "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," introduces his long and earnest plea for the recognition of his apostolic authority, on the part of the Church at Corinth particularly. In Col. 3:12-16 "a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another," together with "love which is the bond of perfectness," is associated with "the peace of Christ" to which all "were called in one body." In Eph. 4:1-16 we have the same thought more definitely and fully expressed. In *v.* 2 "lowliness of mind and meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another," are mentioned as the means for preserving the unity of the Church (*vv.* 3-6) — "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," "one body," "one Spirit," "one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all." And in the closest connection with this the *organization* of the Church is considered (*vv.* 7-16). This is a charismatic organization, — "to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . And some he gave to be apostles; and some, prophets;" etc. It corresponds to the organic constitution of the human body, — all the charismata minister "unto the building up of the body of Christ: . . . that we may grow up in all things unto him, which is the head, Christ; from whom the whole body fitly framed and knit together by that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

For the effectual working of a charismatic organization — an organization without law — the virtue of lowliness and meekness is manifestly indispensable — *it is also sufficient*.

But the most remarkable passage is Phil. 2:1-11, a passage which is zealously exploited for the Christological dogma it contains, without much reflecting that St. Paul here adduces the profoundest points of his theology for the mere practical pur-

pose of settling a petty faction which two women had initiated in the Church at Philippi. As the only cure for faction and vainglory, the disposition of each to regard his own things as of preëminent importance, St. Paul exhorts to lowliness of mind (*ταπεινοφροσύνη*), the disposition to look also on the things of others, to count others better than oneself. Our Lord himself taught that this disposition was to be learned of him, and it is adequately defined only as it is exhibited in his person. Hence St. Paul goes on to define it as "*the mind which was in Christ Jesus*: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." All the moral force of this great dogma the apostle converges in one practical point, and directs to the apparently incommensurate aim of healing a petty schism in the congregation.

If the example of Christ—the fact of his Incarnation, the lowliness of his human life, and even the cross itself—cannot beget lowliness of mind in his disciples; if even the Spirit of God is impotent to evoke in the brotherhood the spirit of fellowship (*κοινωνία*—see pp. 127 sq.); or if meekness when it is realized proves ineffectual to maintain order, conformity, and peace in the Church; what other and stronger motive have we to rely upon? Can fear accomplish in the Church what love cannot do? Force and law, what the Holy Ghost cannot effect? Of course, if there be no Holy Ghost, there can be no spiritual Ecclesia; and without the meekness of love, it were as well that the Ecclesia did not exist. But it is possible, one may say, that this motive may be active, yet inadequate; and if so, do we not need an *auxiliary*? At all events, let it not be an auxiliary which tends to weaken the force of this prime motive—as law and compulsion must,—for whatever does so is destructive to the Ecclesia. St. Paul knew no law to compel peace. Therefore he relied solely upon the moral appeal (*vv.* 1–3): "If there be any *exhortation* (*παράκλησις*) in Christ, if any incitement of love, if any *fellowship* (*κοινωνία*, see p. 172) of the

Spirit, if any bowels and compassions, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, doing nothing through faction or through vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself. . . . Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

The scope of meekness reaches even to subjection to law—unjust or unwarranted law though it be—if obedience conduce to the common peace and profit. But it must not be overlooked that this motive upon which we rely is measurably weakened, and at the same time the obstacles which it has to overcome are notably heightened, by the fact that the end which we seek to attain is a *legalized* conformity. If we believe that conformity can be *attained* through love, in spite of obstacles so great; why, when all these obstacles are done away, may it not also be *maintained* by love alone? For love is not an occasional gift, now to burst into exercise, and then to "cease": the singular excellence of love as the pledge of order and conformity in the Ecclesia is expressed by St. Paul in the fact that—unlike the charismata properly so called, prophecy, tongues, etc.—"love never faileth."

With all our laws, how much after all we do still rely upon the *spirit* of conformity to maintain the good order of the Church. Even the Roman Church has not laws precise enough to cover every point of ecclesiastical practice. The Anglican Churches may appear to regulate the conduct of public worship very rigidly by law, but to many it would be surprising to learn how much is actually left to be regulated by custom,—especially in America. Most Protestant denominations, on the other hand, have no law whatsoever for the regulation of worship, and yet adhere to traditional

usage with a strictness which admits of less variety than is found in the so-called liturgical Churches. The Anglican Churches exhibit very significantly — and just now very deplorably — the force of custom prevailing *contra legem*. In them as no where else is cherished the ideal of acting ever upon a principle fit to be law universal for the Church. The ideal is a right one: the Anglican Churches are in fact only so many denominations; but they aspire to be Churches, and to act upon no law which is not *Church* law, ecumenical law. It is this aspiration, and no spirit of faction or vainglory, which prompts the disuse of all denominational titles in favor of “the Church,” and justifies the qualification “catholic,” for those at least who employ it in the inclusive rather than the exclusive sense. Good must ultimately come of this aspiration for a universal Ecclesia, but at present the ideal is faultily applied when it leads men to insist upon the reintroduction of *strange* customs because they *once were* universal. Universality in time past is not an absolute criterion for the Church; if it were so, it would be a legal criterion; and it is certainly one which, in view of the history of the Church, it is now impossible to follow without contradiction. The spirit of meekness and love might well prompt us to submit to customs which are now well nigh universal in Christendom; but surely not at the expense of offending those that are nearest us in the Ecclesia. The ideal here contemplated, as at present it is followed, conduces not to conformity and peace, but to unseemly variety, discord and disunion. In reality it witnesses to the ideal necessity of an Ecclesia without law; but at present it leads, in ways which are necessarily vague and various, to the pursuit of a customary law. For it is only as medieval custom is regarded as a



divine *law* for the Church, that it can be pressed with such rigorous insistence, in contradiction not only to the present practice but to the positive law of the denomination to which one has either explicitly or implicitly pledged obedience. When a custom is regarded — however ignorantly — as justified by the universal practice of the Church, it is held superior to all law. Yet as a matter of fact *we have no customary law*, and the fact here cited is proof that *law* is not the only, nor the strongest, influence for order in the Church.

Above in note D, which I have quoted from Sohm, something is said, but not enough, about St. Paul's emphasis upon *order* in the Church; something, too, but not explicitly enough, about his estimate of the authority of custom. There is a tendency in some quarters to take a minimizing view of the influence St. Paul may have exerted upon the order and organization of the Church, representing that he was too much preoccupied with purely spiritual and doctrinal concerns to attend to affairs of outward order. But this rests upon a false conception of the man. Of course we get a radically different conception if we accept as genuine the Pastoral Epistles, which represent the apostle largely if not predominantly concerned about details of order and organization. Some care for organization and uniform order is indicated in Acts 14:23, if we may trust the account that Paul and Barnabas, in retracing the course of their first missionary journey, "appointed presbyters in every Church" which they had founded. But for the matter here at issue we have no need to appeal to these sources. The "eye-witness" passages of the Acts, and the early epistles, themselves furnish sufficient evidence of the practical sagacity and large political foresight which guided the

apostle in founding his Churches and in maintaining their individual stability and mutual concord. Ramsay<sup>1</sup> has admirably showed that St. Paul's missionary foundations were planned with a breadth of view which reflects the "Roman," the citizen of the Empire, conscious of the imperial ideal, and aspiring after an ecumenical Ecclesia in which even the necessary diversities of race (Col. 3: 11) should be subordinate to a larger practical unity. The imperial ideal for the Ecclesia did not imply the legal organization of the whole as the counterpart of the Empire, nor the organization of the individual congregations in terms of the municipal government; but it implied something quite as practical as legal organization, the accomplishment, namely, of three closely related aims: ready and frequent intercourse, uninterrupted fellowship, and substantial similarity of custom. Men seek in St. Paul's writings for evidence of a legal organization, and because they do not find that, they are prone to think he had no interest in order and organization of any sort, and that the unity he demanded was not a practical and visible unity.

We have already seen that the epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians are not needed to prove that St. Paul conceived of the Ecclesia as one, indivisible, and universal. The very idea of the Ecclesia involved the imperial ideal of unity and conformity, as much as it excluded legal means for the attainment of this end; and no one could cherish this ideal without seeking to realize it in every practical institution of Christian life. It is intolerable that radically different customs should obtain in the Church of God, — still more that through

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire* (1893), and *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (1895).

differences of custom practical fellowship should be interrupted.

The first and greatest problem St. Paul had to face, and one which engaged him throughout his whole ministry, was the threatened schism between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians. He pursued his aim of reconciliation with no less zeal in the latter years when it involved only the maintenance of practical unity between the two great and well established sections of the Church, than in the beginning when the very existence of his mission to the Gentiles was at stake and the question hung in the balance whether the Church could transcend the limitations of a national religion and show itself *fit* to be universal. He pursued this aim by every means in his power, by boldness of rebuke where essential issues were at stake, by meekness of concession where compromise was admissible; and by the power of his personality, by his unquenchable faith, by the Spirit of God, he triumphed,—though so great were the obstacles to be overcome that triumph remained ever on the verge of failure.<sup>2</sup>

In this case considerable diversity of custom as be-

<sup>2</sup> The great practical agency that he employed to cement the fellowship of Jewish and Gentile Christians was the "contribution" (*κοινωνία* — properly *fellowship*) which he repeatedly collected from his converts in aid of the saints at Jerusalem. Hence it is that he says in Rom. 15 : 30, 31, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that . . . my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints." And in 2 Cor. 9 : 12-14, "For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God,—through the proof of this service glorifying God for the subjection of your confession unto the Gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your fellowship unto them and unto all; while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you."

tween Gentiles and Jews had to be tolerated ; but it was not properly a diversity in respect to *Christian* custom ; and to show that the points of difference were at bottom indifferent to the faith, St. Paul himself lived as a Jew with the Jews, and as a Greek with the Greeks. He made a clear distinction between things in themselves essential, and things in themselves indifferent ; and few men have been more liberal in reckoning the practices which belong to the latter class. But, on the other hand, few have been more exacting with respect to indifferent things. No one has more exalted the freedom of the Christian man ; but, again, no one has so clearly recognized that freedom is merely an *opportunity* for duty.

For some hundreds of years we have emphasized Christian individuality and freedom at the expense of the solidarity and duty which are no less essential aspects of Christianity. What St. Paul gives with one hand he seems to take away with the other. Where there was reason to fear a legalizing tendency, there Paul emphasized Christian freedom. But freedom is no guide for the conduct of life : duty is the guide and freedom is its sphere. Considered in relation to society there is almost no action that remains indifferent ; all is brought into subjection to the moral law, and either exacted or proscribed by the law of love, — “*for conscience sake* — conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other’s ” (1 Cor. 10 : 29). In the things which are indifferent in themselves St. Paul saw — *just because they are indifferent* — the opportunity for concession, the duty of conformity. The sphere of duty is coextensive with the sphere of freedom. This is the “yoke” of Christ ; the meek yoke which Jesus himself bore, and imposed upon his disciples ; a yoke which appears heavy, but is found light where love prompts to service. It is the



yoke which St. Paul bore, and encouraged all Christians to bear together: "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the Church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 10 : 32 sqq.)

These principles which St. Paul invoked in view of the threatened division of Jewish and Gentile Christians, he applied as well to every schism which menaced the peace of the individual congregation or of the Church at large. It was not merely heresy he was zealous to avoid (the propagation of "a different Gospel," Gal. 1 : 6); but *schism* pure and simple, every practical division which hindered the realization of fellowship.<sup>3</sup> Next to the founding of his numerous Churches, St. Paul's greatest task was the preservation of the unity of fellowship—consequently the maintenance of conformity and order—within and among them. Recounting the perils he had endured, he says (2 Cor. 11 : 28): "Beside those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the Churches." The exhortations of his epistles were addressed primarily, as a matter of course, to the settlement of disorders within the individual congregations, but even this was subsidiary to the larger aim of maintaining a concordant order among all the Churches of his founding.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. 2 : 1-11; 4 : 2; 1 Cor. 1 : 10-13 : 3 : 3, 4. If the divisions at Corinth were not fairly in the spirit of our modern orthodox *denominations*, I should like to know what else they were. St. Paul gives no hint of a specific doctrinal divergency, but only of a practical breach of Church unity, a spirit which was sectarian in the strictest sense of the word, being expressed in the affirmations:—"I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

The epistle which contains most evidence of St. Paul's carefulness to maintain conformity among the Churches is 1 Corinthians, the same which makes so much of Christian liberty, and is occupied more than any other with the effort to resist tendencies towards internal division. The abuse of Christian liberty would evidently have a disintegrating effect in both spheres alike, as between members of the individual Church, and as between it and the sister Churches of the same or other lands. In the very salutation the Corinthians are taught to regard themselves as united "with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place — their Lord and ours." The one Lord is here set forth as the common bond of union, and obedience to him as Lord is the uniting law of life. Then in verse 9, after giving thanks for those gifts of theirs which threatened to produce disorder and jealousy rather than peace and edification, he returns to the thought of the community of Christendom: "Faithful is the God through whom ye were called into fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," — fellowship *of* him, not only fellowship *with* him, though that also, but fellowship with one another and with all the saints, derived from that fellowship with himself which was common to them all. It is of course not the grammatical structure which here decides the meaning, but the common conception of "fellowship" (*κοινωνία*) in the New Testament, — cf. Phil. 2 : 1.<sup>4</sup>

Having put before the Corinthians this fundamental teaching at the beginning of the epistle, St. Paul repeatedly afterwards gives it a practical application by

<sup>4</sup> This and the two following paragraphs are taken substantially from Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 119 sq. They are not marked by inverted commas, simply because I desired to alter slightly the phraseology.

his appeals to Christian usage elsewhere. The authorities to which he appeals are of various kinds, *e. g.* traditions which he himself had received, directly or indirectly, from the Lord;<sup>5</sup> or his own judgment of what is seemly and expedient, which he expressly distinguishes from a command of the Lord, though he is confident that it is formed agreeably to God's Spirit;<sup>6</sup> or, where other resorts fail, he appeals to the concordant practice of the Churches. Of the praying of women unveiled he says (9 : 16), "We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God." Enjoining order in the prophesyings (or, according to another punctuation, the silence of women in the assemblies), he adds (14 : 33), "as in all the Churches of the saints;" and with reference to the speaking of women he asks indignantly (v. 36), "Is it from you that the word of God came forth, or is it unto you alone that it reached?" In a different and calmer tone he simply seeks for a precedent for what he would have the Corinthians do in the matter of the collection for Judea (16 : 1); "as I directed for the Churches of Galatia, so do ye also." For a much larger matter of practice and principle, the remaining of each convert in the relation of life in which he found himself, he urges (7 : 17), "and so I direct in all the Churches;" while in an earlier passage, he binds up this principle of community with the obligations created by his personal relation as a founder (4 : 14-17), bidding them be imitators of him, as their true father in respect of their new life, and telling them that he sends them in Timothy another beloved child of his, "who shall put you in mind of my ways that are in Christ Jesus, as I teach everywhere in every Church."

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 11 : 2, 23; 15 : 3; cf. Thess. 2 : 15; 3 : 6.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. 7 : 10, 12, 40.

The ideal of Church unity which the apostle followed is even more clearly revealed when we consider the practical means which he employed to attain it. What he constantly aimed after was to maintain true fellowship between the various Churches, by encouraging constant intercourse, and by prompting expressions and acts of loving sympathy. It is in view of these efforts we are to read his warm thanksgivings for the *going forth* of the faith and love of this or that Church towards other Churches, so as to be known and to bear fruit far and wide.<sup>7</sup> One practical result of friendly intercommunion between separate Churches — and one of the greatest practical means towards it — was the cultivation of hospitality, giving the assurance that Christians who had need to travel would find temporary home and welcome wherever other Christians were established.<sup>8</sup> Again, St. Paul had doubtless a deliberate purpose when he rejoiced to convey the mutual salutations of the Churches;<sup>9</sup> when he commended Phoebe to the Romans as one who had ministered to the sister Church of Cenchreae;<sup>10</sup> gave order for the exchange of epistles of his addressed to two neighboring Churches;<sup>11</sup> and made this or that Church a sharer, so to speak, in his own work of founding or visiting other Churches, by allusions to his being *forwarded* by them.<sup>12</sup> By itself each of these details may seem trivial enough; but together they help to show St. Paul's sense of the unity of the body of Christ, and his watchfulness for every opportunity of

<sup>7</sup> 1 Thess. 1 : 7 sq.; 4 : 9 sq.; 2 Thess. 1 : 3 sq.; 2 Cor. 3 : 2; Rom. 1 : 8; Col. 1 : 4.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Rom. 12 : 13; 1 Pet. 4 : 9; Heb. 13 : 2; 3 John 5-8.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Cor. 16 : 19; Rom. 16 : 4, 16; Phil. 4 : 22.

<sup>10</sup> Rom. 16 : 1, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Col. 4 : 16.

<sup>12</sup> *προπεμφθῆναι* — 1 Cor. 16 : 6; 2 Cor. 1 : 16; Rom. 15 : 24.



kindling and keeping alive in each society a consciousness of its share in the life of the great Ecclesia of God.

St. Paul's exhortation, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14: 40), had not solely in view the convenient regulation of the assemblies of the individual congregation; for to the maxim which he enunciates in *v.* 33, that "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace," he adds the phrase, "as in all the Churches of the saints."

The most significant proof of St. Paul's concern for external order—and all the more significant because the matter at issue is in itself trivial—is his defence of the custom of the veiling of women in the Church (1 Cor. 11: 2–16). He seems to class this *with*—though probably not *among*—"the traditions" (*v.* 2) which he had delivered to the Corinthian Church. In some way the usage had become established in the Church—in contradiction alike to Jewish and Roman practice—for men to pray and prophesy with uncovered head, and on this point there seems to have arisen no controversy. On the other hand, the veiling of women in the Church was evidently a reflection of the social custom which prevailed in the Empire, and it is therefore the more strange that any should be found to dissent from it. At bottom it was only by appeal to the universality of the custom that a divergent practice could be condemned. The veiling of the head was purely a formal matter, and St. Paul's attempt to justify it upon theological grounds is inconclusive where it is not unintelligible.<sup>13</sup> To identify long or short hair, and even a shorn or unshorn head,

<sup>13</sup> *vv.* 7–10, especially the conclusion, "For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority upon her head, because of the angels."

with the use or disuse of a head-covering (vv. 5, 6) is far-fetched; and the appeal to the *teaching of nature* (vv. 14, 15) only proves how powerful was the force of Graeco-Roman custom, if a Jew like St. Paul, bred in the strictest sect of the Pharisees, could so ignore the precedents of his own nation as to believe that for a man to wear his hair long was in the very nature of the case to dishonor himself. Likewise the appeal of v. 13 has no other force than that of an *argumentum ad hominem* — “Judge ye in yourselves: is it *seemly* that a woman pray unto God unveiled?” St. Paul evidently felt that all these arguments were inconclusive: he could produce no commandment of the Lord upon the subject; he could claim no special revelation, no inward assurance that what he desired was conformable to the mind of Christ, and might therefore be enjoined by apostolic authority; he could not even treat the question as a moral issue, as though a breach of feminine modesty was necessarily implied in appearing with head unveiled; but he could appeal to the universal custom of the Church, and that he counted sufficient to settle all dispute — “But if any man seemeth to be contentious, *we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God*” (v. 16).<sup>14</sup>

If the apostle was so much concerned about this matter, what question of external order could have lain outside his interest? It is not, indeed, to be supposed that he had a doctrinaire interest in devising beforehand a scheme of order and organization. Rather

<sup>14</sup> The practice has been maintained to this day *simply by force of custom*, and it prevails even where secular custom no longer prescribes the covering of the head outside the Church. The hat or bonnet, however, of to-day is rather an arbitrary substitute for the *veil* which St. Paul required, and it is doubtful if he would have thought it a seemly and natural symbol of woman's subjection.

he dealt with practical cases as they arose, but he settled them in accordance with a principle—if not a plan—which was calculated to affect uniformity of order in the Church at large. The early epistles, particularly 1 Corinthians, are sufficient to prove St. Paul's keen interest in the regulation of the external order of the Church. But the epistles furnish hints of only a small minority of the ordinances which the apostle must have established among the Churches of his foundation. The general regulation of Christian life and worship belonged of course to the period of his sojourn in the community; it was only with the unforeseen emergencies he dealt in his epistles, and even in such cases he preferred to postpone the regulation of details till such time as he might revisit the congregation—1 Cor. 11 : 34. The Pastoral Epistles display no more interest in the regulation of external order than we can reasonably attribute to St. Paul; nor, considering the purpose of these letters, is there any thing incongruous in the proportion of attention there devoted to such subjects.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> If the Pastoral Epistles are not genuine, they witness at least to the belief that St. Paul was the great organizer of the Church. The prevalent notion that matters of external order and organization were foreign to St. Paul's interest, rests upon two assumptions which hardly will endure to be candidly stated. The apostle's great and predominant interest in the fundamental questions of religion and morality does not raise the least presumption that he was indifferent to matters of external order and the many practical measures which are valuable only as a means to an end. Still less does his contention for Christian freedom in face of the exactions of the Mosaic law—even if it be taken to imply the exclusion of ritual law of all sorts from the Church—afford the least suggestion that the apostle was disposed to ignore the practical advantages of uniform order and organization.—It has been shown that universal uniformity of custom was an ideal inherent in the very notion of the Church; but there can be no doubt that the example of the Roman Empire and the influence of the ideal which it pursued, contributed to define and strengthen the Christian ideal, as well as to render

Catholicism was right in attributing a high importance to the universal custom of the Church. It corresponds to St. Paul's practice, and to the very nature of the Ecclesia, that the custom of all the Churches should be regarded as a norm for the conduct of each. Let the fault of nonconformity lie where it may, — the practical difficulty of settling this question

practicable its realization. We must assume that St. Paul the Roman citizen was influenced by the imperial ideal, which aimed at the establishment of a uniform civilization for the whole world and so contemplated a sphere no less extensive than the Church was called upon to occupy. This ideal of a universal empire insuring conformity and peace was cherished by the Church long after the imperial order had actually passed away. The "Holy Roman Empire" was regarded as the counterpart of the holy universal Church; and so long as the political ideal survived, it served in turn to confirm the catholic aspiration of the Church. The modern national system of Europe is the negation of this political ideal, and the national Churches are the negation of the ecumenical Ecclesia. The unifying ideal of to-day is that of *Christian civilization*. Our modern civilization has not been wrought by martial conquests, nor is it expressed by unity of government; but, in all except the use of a universal language, it covers a broader sphere and represents a more substantial unity than ever Rome was able to compass. Modern civilization is tending towards a new *international* ideal, which aspires no longer after a common law and government, but after concordant custom and peace. The Church cannot remain unaffected by an ideal which is so thoroughly in keeping with its own proper aim. This ideal, however, is still thwarted by the prejudice of nationality not only, but also by the prejudice of race; and it must be remembered that the latter is no less opposed than the former to the universal aim of the Church. The Anglo-Saxon civilization, for example, though it be actually more extensive than the Roman Empire, can never be more than a partial and exclusive expression of human culture, and is therefore no apt exponent of the universality of the Ecclesia. As a matter of fact, we are accustomed to regard the common civilization of Europe as the adequate expression of Christendom. But even this conception is not large and liberal enough: the world is larger for us than it was for St. Paul, and its peoples are more various; there is no one civilization which can rightly be regarded as the indispensable counterpart of Christendom, and the indiscriminating attempt to fasten upon foreign peoples the purely indifferent usages of our civilization is at present the fatality of all missionary endeavor.



must not be allowed to obscure the fact that conformity is the rule of the Ecclesia. Marked divergencies of order and custom are intolerable, because they discredit the belief in the divine guidance of the Church, and hinder the realization of fellowship.<sup>16</sup> The prevailing custom of the Church, whether at this moment or at any time in the past, must possess a high authority — and a purely objective authority — for any one who is conscious of the unity of the Church's life in Christ. This may be affirmed without abating by one jot the rigor of Sohm's denial — *No law in the Church*. For the authority of custom is not necessarily a *legal* authority.

Kahl<sup>17</sup> very properly makes much of the importance of custom as the expression of Christian consciousness and the regulator of Church life; but he errs in treating custom as though it were equivalent to customary law. He justly recognizes that custom has even a higher authority in the Church than in civil life, — and a unique authority at that, because it is a more direct and immediate expression of the Christian consciousness than any formula of written law can be. Custom may pass by unperceived gradations into customary law, and yet the two ideas are entirely distinct.

<sup>16</sup> Take any Church you please, and by the very admission that it is a Church you raise the *presumption* that the order which it maintains is conformable to God's will, and *therefore* is to be accepted by every other Church. This at least is the early view: it must be admitted that nowadays such a presumption has very little weight. How then, if we justify the diversities of sectarian custom, can we continue to believe in God's guidance of the whole Church, — except by premising that the things in which we differ are altogether indifferent to his will? But if we *now* so regard them, we can no longer regard them as questions of conscience. Why then should we not yield them in the spirit of conformity for the sake even of a petty practical advantage? — for that *at least* is involved.

<sup>17</sup> *Lehrsystem des Kirchenrechts*, pp. 96 sq., 129 sq.

Custom has an authority of its own, and it exacts its own natural penalties for any breach of the common order; but it has neither formal authority nor formal penalties, and it can become a legal instance only by being formally recognized as such. The authority of customary or unwritten *law* is not different in kind from that of written law, only it is less sure of *recognition*. The name properly denotes not so much the form of the law as the source whence the matter of its precept is derived: customary *law* is no less *formal* than the enactments of legislation. However elusive the distinction between custom and customary law may be, it is very necessary to observe it; and while recognizing to the full the *moral* obligation of conformity to custom, we must deny to custom the formal authority of prescriptive law. The transition from primitive Christianity to Catholicism is explained by the ignoring of this distinction: hence it is that the transition was so gradual, so unobserved, and is now so difficult to locate.

Customary law was the only law possible in the earliest period of Catholicism, while there was yet no recognized legislative authority. The development of provincial synods constituted such an authority, and it was then but a short step from the recognition of the legal authority of custom to legislative enactment. The early canons for the most part were designed merely to formulate and affirm customs already prevalent in the Church; nor did they add anything to the authority of customary law, since the function of the synod was merely to *ascertain* what doctrines were conformable to the truth and what customs were agreeable to God's will. But from the first the tendency was to supersede customary law by canon law; and when, with the pro-

gressive development of Catholicism, the bishop, council, or pope was formally recognized as a legislative authority *jure divino*, the authority of custom could not but seem incomplete until it was confirmed by enactment. Consequently, Catholicism, which seemed peculiarly favorable to the development of customary law on a great scale, has actually tended to exclude it. The *Corpus juris canonici* — particularly Distinctions *I.*, *XI.* and *XII.* of the *Decretum Gratiani*, and *lib. I. tit. 1* of the *Extravagantes communes* — gives some idea of the force of customary law in the Church. But now that the minutest details are ordered by enactment, the operation of customary law is confined to the narrowest sphere — chiefly to privileges and exceptions. This is the logical development of a system which make all authority emanate from the hierarchy.

Kahl justly remarks that the Protestant Churches actually leave a greater scope for the operation of customary law, though the lack of a consciousness of unity is unfavorable to its development. But it is entirely futile for Kahl to contend that the customary law of the Protestant Churches constitutes a type of law which is in harmony with the idea of the Church and defensible against Sohm's attack upon law in general, for as a matter of fact the Protestant Churches have no customary law. Customs have, indeed, by enactment become laws, and sometimes by a decree so general that it may seem like a legitimation of customary authority; but the tendency of Protestantism has been to disparage customary law, and it has succeeded in excluding it more absolutely than Romanism has been able to do. This is in the interest, not indeed of a hierarchy, but of the regularly constituted legislative authority, of whatever sort it may be. It reflects the influence of the

modern civil ideal, and the modern practice of confining customary law to one source, and that not a popular one; namely, the decisions of the judiciary. Law of this sort is manifestly ill adapted to the Protestant Churches, with their impromptu courts, organized occasionally to deal with special cases of discipline. Following again the pattern of the state, all the Protestant Churches of America have formulated written *constitutions* and *by-laws* for the regulation of the more important matters of Church order. And if they have not been inclined to imitate the zeal of our civil legislatures for enacting laws to cover every case that may conceivably arise (a practice which is intended to reduce as far as possible the legislative importance of judicial decisions); and if thus they have actually left a broad sphere *free* for the operation of customary law, they nevertheless have *no law* of this sort.<sup>18</sup>

This is not to say that custom has no influence in the Protestant Churches, but only that it has no legal authority. Custom is inherently a social power, independent of all reflection upon the character of its authority. Because so great a sphere is open to its operation, and because it is *not* regarded as law, it is possible to hope that conformity of order in the Ecclesia may be wrought

<sup>18</sup> In its relation to written law, custom is commonly distinguished as *secundum*, *praeter*, and *contra legem*. In the Protestant Churches no custom is allowed to derogate from the enactments of legislative authority: that is to say, custom can have no authority *contra legem*. Of custom *secundum legem* it is unnecessary to speak; for great as its practical force may be, it has no legal effect. Custom *praeter legem* — the custom that serves as a *complement* to written law, operating in a field which law has left free — is the only category that it is important to consider; and even such custom, so far as it is recognized at all in the Protestant Churches, is never accorded the authority of prescriptive law, but at the most the force of permissive right or privilege. It has proper legal authority only in one case; namely, where it must be relied upon to interpret the intention of an ambiguous enactment.



through custom. No one who has noted the fluidity of custom in our Churches, who has reflected upon the changes that have come about unobserved during the past few decades, and has seen how broadly public opinion operates in defiance of denominational lines, can altogether lose hope that the consciousness of the unity of the Church of God, and the spirit of brotherly love and meekness, may be able to effect at no far date a substantial conformity of order which no force of law can exact — nor impede.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ASSEMBLY FOR INSTRUCTION

#### § 12, OF CHURCH ASSEMBLIES IN GENERAL

SOCIAL assembly is a natural and necessary expression of the Christian life. It is true of course that other religions require popular assembly, either for participation in public pomps and ceremonies, or for instruction in morality and religion; but there is no religion to which the idea of social assembly is so essential as it is to Christianity. Christianity has reasons for assembly which lie deeper than the above, reasons that are expressed in the notion of brotherhood, and implied in the very idea of the Church. This peculiarity of the Church is strikingly exemplified in the character of its architecture: the pagan temple was designed as a house for the deity; the Christian house of worship is designed primarily as a house for the people of God, who themselves, *as an assembly*, constitute the temple of the Holy Ghost. Three, or even two disciples, may constitute a Church; but *one* cannot. And though the smallest number suffices to fulfil the essential conditions, the spirit of Christian brotherhood is not satisfied with less than the fullest assembly that opportunity permits, the completest social expression of the neighborhood or community. Social assembly is thus essential to Christianity, and nothing could be further from its ideal than the unsocial practice of the

ascetic hermits, or of those who nowadays, without asceticism, abstain from church-going.

If we raise the question, Why should we assemble in the Church? the completest answer is, *In order that we may be together.* Modern Christianity has obscured the reasons for church-going, inasmuch as it regards the assembly as existing solely or chiefly for the purpose of religious worship or scholastic instruction. When the social elements of the assembly are suppressed, and the prime fact is obscured that *there* in a peculiar manner the Spirit of Christ is present, heightening all the potentialities of Christian life; then it becomes natural to raise the question, May not the offices of Christian worship be as duly performed in the closet, and Christian doctrine be better learned from books?—and it is often necessary to answer such a question in the affirmative. The difficulty is that Christianity emphasizes strongly both aspects of religious life, the individual and the social; and where both are not strongly conceived there is a tendency to one-sided development. The tendency to neglect the social duty and privilege was manifested from the beginning, and hence the need of the exhortation in Heb. 10:25,—“not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is.” But there is no reason whatever to suppose that this tendency was general, or even so common as it is to-day. The fundamental reasons for gathering together were well understood in the early Church, and clearly expressed in the nature of the Christian assembly. This very exhortation stands in a context which correctly indicates the motive of the Christian assembly, and essentially describes its character: “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assem-

bling of ourselves together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another."

When we speak of the Christian assembly we are apt to think chiefly, if not exclusively, of a religious cult — what we are accustomed to term "divine service." But the name assembly is the better one: it emphasizes the social significance of the gathering, and is broad enough to cover the many diverse functions which were performed by the Christian brotherhood *ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ*. Divine service in the specific sense was never the prime reason for the assembly, and it often formed no feature of it at all. No assembly was held for the sole purpose of *worship*; and what was done in the assembly was done not so much to influence the deity, as to confirm the faith of the brotherhood. The agape or love-feast was an assembly whose chief object was to express Christian fellowship; and the same purpose was predominant in the Lord's Supper: it exhibited Christian fellowship in its deepest terms, as communion *in Christ*; and it required as of necessity no element of worship besides the prayer of thanksgiving.<sup>1</sup> The Christian assembly for instruction had its nearest analogy in the Synagogue; but, again, it was more fundamentally social in character. The Synagogue had as its particular possession the Law, the interpretation of which was the chief purpose of the assembly and the common concern of all the members; the great

<sup>1</sup> There was no point upon which the Protestant Churches were in the beginning more thoroughly agreed than in restoring the act of Communion as an inseparable — and indeed as the principal — feature of the Eucharist. They were justified in this by Catholic as well as by primitive practice, though the fact that the rite was regarded by early Catholicism chiefly as an act of cultus, designed to affect the deity, explains the subsequent development of the medieval practice of private and solitary masses.



and distinctive possession of the Church was Jesus the Christ, and the common aim of the members in every assembly — particularly in that for instruction — was the mutual encouragement and confirmation of the faith that is in him. What was there done was done for common benefit and mutual edification (1 Cor. 14 : 26), and what did not serve this purpose was relegated to private use (*v.* 28). Even the elements which we are accustomed to account a part of worship in the most exclusive sense were there valued principally as tending to edification.<sup>2</sup>

Faith in Christ is a possession so characteristic of the Church, and a motive which moulds so powerfully the conduct of the Christian assembly, that it is useless to look abroad, to the Synagogue or to pagan cults, for an historical pattern of the Christian worship — for worship we may properly call it, if we understand the word in its broadest sense. Moreover, the character of the Christian assemblies remained essentially the same throughout the entire period covered by the New Testament writings, and Weizsäcker admits<sup>3</sup> that in this respect there was hardly a noticeable difference between the Jewish and the Gentile Churches. The early Church in Jerusalem was not in a position to develop a cult of its own; for the Christians still continued to frequent the Temple, — however they may have been inclined to regard some particulars of the Temple-service. Hence what was left for the Christian assembly was

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 14 : 26, "When ye come together each one hath a *psalm*, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation — let all things be done unto edifying." Col. 3 : 16 (cf. Ephes. 5 : 19) "*teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, with grace; singing in your hearts unto God.*" Modern hymnology generally conforms to this ideal — in spite of our modern theory of worship.

<sup>3</sup> *Apost. Zeitalter*, p. 546.

chiefly the exhibition and confirmation of its unique possession in the Christian faith. The faith was confirmed by all the tokens of God's presence in the Church: by the exercise of spiritual gifts and by prayer — the answer to prayer<sup>4</sup> being regarded as the fulfilment of Christian joy and confidence (John 16 : 24). To the same position the Gentile Christians were brought by an opposite way. For them the new faith stood in the most express contrast to their former religion, and hence to the whole character of its cult, the essential feature of which was the effort to influence the deity by sacrifice. What remained for them therefore (as in the other case) was nothing else than the confirmation of their common faith, in brotherly fellowship.<sup>5</sup>

In Rom. 12 : 1, St. Paul characterizes divine service in the Christian sense by the expression λογικὴ λατρεία. This is not the same as λατρεία πνευματική; the Apostle is not here concerned to affirm that this service is offered in the strength of God's Spirit; but he would say this, that the Christian service, in distinction from all sacrificial cults, is rendered in one's own person, and is directed by intelligent thought, by right reason. The "reasonable service" of the Christian is contrasted on the one hand with the unintelligible expression of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14 : 19), as much as with the unspiritual cults of Paganism on the other (Phil. 3 : 3). In the same way St. Paul employs the notion of λειτουργεῖν (to minister) in an ethical sense,<sup>6</sup> thus restoring to its original meaning a word which the Septuagint had used in a strictly ritual sense in reference to the Temple-

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 18 : 19; 21 : 22.

<sup>5</sup> Weizsäcker, *op. cit.* p. 547.

<sup>6</sup> Λειτουργεῖν, to minister as a priest, Rom. 15 : 27; λειτουργία, priestly service, 2 Cor. 9 : 12; Phil. 2 : 17, 30; λειτουργός, ministrant, Rom. 15 : 16; Phil. 2 : 25.

service. It is only in this sense, therefore, that the Christian assembly can be regarded as an assembly for religious cult or worship.<sup>7</sup>

The character of the Christian assembly defines the nature and functions of the Christian ministry. The officers of the Church became officers in a strict sense only as they received recognition as such in the assembly. The endowments which fitted them for ministry did not constitute them officers: some distinctive spiritual gifts — as the gift of tongues — never developed corresponding offices; and although the most important ministrations of some of the officers lay outside the assembly, it was the character of the assembly itself and of the worship which was there conducted that determined their official status. No officer, moreover, can be thought of as acting officially apart from the assembly. Offices and officers are not essential to the Ecclesia, though spiritual endowments and spiritually endowed persons are. The endowments are given by God; the offices are more or less strictly defined by the character of the Christian assembly; and the officers are constituted by the popular recognition of the appropriate endowments in particular persons. Offices and officers were early developed in the Church, but so long as a formal and final legitimation was wanting — that is, until the Catholic development — we miss something of the definiteness that we are accustomed to associate with these conceptions.

The above is true both for the early period when the assemblies for instruction and for the Eucharist were distinct, and for the Catholic period when they were united. Plainly, therefore, some account of the Christian assemblies is necessary, if we would understand the nature of

<sup>7</sup> Weizsäcker, *op. cit.* p. 548.

Church government in general and the character of the ministry in particular. I had planned to include in this work a general discussion of the principles of Christian worship, and a full account of the forms of worship which were developed during the first three centuries, — meaning to treat this subject as *coördinate* with the study of Church government, which the exigencies of space ultimately compelled me to adopt as the sole theme of this volume. I hope to treat of Christian worship later and in a separate work, and here it must suffice to give only such a brief account as is clearly subordinate to the purpose in hand. This statement is made by way of apology, in case some of the propositions here enunciated seem to be supported by less proof than they require.

Any assembly of Christians was competent to transact any business or perform any functions belonging to the Ecclesia. There was nothing in the nature of the case to prevent all being done in the same assembly: the functions of discipline, administration, and government, as well as the offices of instruction and worship, and the celebration of the sacraments, might all have been performed at the same time and place. There were also no assemblies which were not popular assemblies, — assemblies of the people of God as such. We must be on our guard, therefore, not to import into the early age the hard and fast distinctions we are accustomed to draw between assemblies for worship and instruction, committees of administration, congresses of government, and courts of discipline.

But on the other hand there seems to have been one distinction in the early Church which we have in a large measure lost. We cannot well conceive that room could be found for the Lord's Supper, such as it



is described in 1 Cor. 11, in connection with the assembly for instruction and the great variety of edifying exercises that are recounted in c. 14. Though the text does not expressly distinguish two sorts of assembly held for different objects and at different times, we may fairly assume such a distinction. St. Paul implies it when he says (1 Cor. 11:33), “when ye come together to eat,” *εἰς τὸ φαγεῖν*, — he could not use such an expression unless the meal were the sole object of the assembly. In 1 Cor. 14:26, he uses a corresponding expression to indicate the assembly for instruction — “when ye come together, each one hath a psalm, a teaching, etc. — let all serve to edification.” In all of these various yet similar items the nature of the assembly is exhaustively expressed. The distinction between the two assemblies is further indicated by the fact that one of them was open to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:23–25) — which certainly does not comport with the Lord’s Supper. Mention is made also in these verses of an *ἰδιώτης* as having access to the assembly: he is here classed with the unbeliever, but in v. 16 it is implied that he has a definite place assigned him in the congregation, and is accustomed to join in “the Amen” of the brethren. In the latter instance he seems to be in intimate relations with the assembly, while in the former he is assumed to occupy a detached and possibly a critical attitude. This does not appear to suit the case of a Christian who merely for lack of distinctive spiritual gifts remains a passive participant in the doings of the assembly. It is more likely that the word denotes the catechumen of later Church discipline, — one who is a regular attendant at the assemblies as a part of his instruction in the faith, but is not yet baptized. At any rate, the presence of other men

who were distinctly non-Christian, but upon whom the rational discourse of the prophets was expected to exert a profound moral effect, implies that the assembly had in part a missionary aim. To suppose that the Lord's Supper took place in this assembly, would oblige us to assume that some of the participants in the missionary part of the meeting were dismissed prior to the Eucharist — which will hardly do in view of 11:33. Neither the unbelievers nor the "unenlightened" — to use a later term — could possibly share in the feast, and one may be sure that there were no mere observers present.

Both sorts of assembly could take place, of course, upon the same day. Into the intricate question of the hours of service it is not necessary for our present purpose to enter. But it emerges with sufficient clearness that certain days were regularly observed as days of assembly. This may be inferred from the mere fact that the assembly was regarded as something especial — not of every-day occurrence. In Rev. 1:10 the Lord's Day is designated not only as the occasion of the vision, but evidently also as the day for divine service. When therefore in 1 Cor. 16:2 St. Paul exhorts the disciples to lay by in store upon the first day of the week their contributions for the saints, the likelihood is that this was done in the assembly. It was evidently not the keeping of a private mite-box the apostle enjoined, if it was to fulfil the purpose that he expresses — "that no collections be made when I come." Thus the observance of Sunday as the principal day of assembly is clearly enough established as the custom of both Jewish and Gentile Christians in the early part of the Apostolic Age. We have also good grounds for the conjecture that it was particularly the day for the Eucha-

ristic assembly — as it certainly was early in the second century.<sup>8</sup> And it is not improbable that Wednesday and Friday were already distinguished as minor days of assembly, or at least as special fast days.

Very early in the second century the letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan describing the customs of the Christians in Bithynia seems to indicate that the Eucharist was still separate from the assembly for instruction, though both were held upon the same day.<sup>9</sup> By the middle of that century, as we see from Justin Martyr's account, the Eucharist and instruction were commonly united in the one assembly on the morning of the Lord's Day. This union is reflected of course in all the

<sup>8</sup> *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, xiv. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Pliny says that under judicial investigation the Christians confessed as the sum of their fault or error, *quod essent soliti stato die ante lucem convenire carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem, seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coëundi ad capiendum cibum, promiscuum tamen et innoxium, quo secundum mandata tua hetaerías esse vetueram.* — It is not here in place to consider the perplexing questions that are raised by this report. We must remember that it comes to us through the distorting medium of a pagan governor. But it may be regarded as certain that the word *sacramentum* has here no reference to the Eucharist — nor to any formal cult or "sacrament" in the Christian sense. At least neither Tertullian (*Apol.* 2), nor Eusebius (*H. E.* III. 33) so interpret the passage. Making due allowance for Pliny's misinterpretation of the facts, the account proves that moral instruction and discipline were as closely as ever associated with worship in the morning assembly. If it is the Lord's Supper that is referred to in the account of the evening assembly, it is not possible to suppose that the Christians actually ceased to celebrate it at Pliny's command. But Rome's suspicious prohibition of guilds, and of the feasts in which they expressed their social aim, and sometimes concealed a political tendency, is well known; and this instance of the operation of the law may perhaps point to *one* of the reasons which induced the Christians to make the Eucharist the mere symbol of a feast, which might readily be associated with the morning assembly — as in fact it was, according to Justin Martyr's account, less than fifty years later.

subsequent liturgies, and it has profoundly affected both the character of the Eucharistic celebration and the doctrinal conception of the sacrament. To this was due the elaboration of the liturgy; and, though a later age eliminated the most significant practices of the primitive assembly for instruction, certain traditional elements — hymns, lections, and prayers — have ever since been regarded as essential to the decent, if not to the valid, administration of the sacrament. The Eucharist, on being separated from the agape and united with the service of instruction, ceased to be a meal in the proper sense, and the agape itself fell into low estimation, being no longer regarded as a function in which the whole Church was supposed to be represented. Until the fourth century there seems to have been no disposition to ignore the social implications of the Eucharist; but the implication was no longer a clear one when the common meal — the striking symbol of fellowship — had been reduced to its present proportions; consequently the Catholic doctrine of sacrifice on the one hand, and on the other the popular religious indifference which led to the practice of non-communicating attendance, freely operated to produce the strongly individualistic conception of the sacrament which prevailed until the Reformation.

There are intimations that the earlier mode of celebrating the Eucharist persisted even beyond this time in assemblies of a more or less private character — perhaps in connection with the agape. But it was a fundamental principle of early Catholicism to regard the principal assembly (the bishop's assembly) as the only legitimate manifestation of the Ecclesia (that is, of Christendom); and the theory required that the Eucharist — which could not but be accounted the fore-



most observance of the Church—be confined to the bishop's assembly exclusively. For, in spite of this theory, it was not possible to deny that an assembly that was met to celebrate the Eucharist was an assembly of the Church.

In the Apostolic Age, and indeed from the very beginning of it, a distinction was made *as a matter of fact*—though never as a matter of theory—between the principal assembly (the assembly of the whole community in any locality) and such minor assemblies as we might be inclined to call private. The address of several of St. Paul's epistles<sup>10</sup> implies not only the ideal unity of the Christians of a particular town, but an actual assembly representative of the whole Church to which the letter might be read. Other assemblies there undoubtedly were which were wont to meet more or less habitually in this or that private house,<sup>11</sup> and which actually included only a minor part of the disciples. But such an assembly was none the less entitled to be called a Church. In reality there was no such thing as a private assembly: there was no assembly from which any Christian from far or near was theoretically excluded—practical exigencies alone accounted for the limitation. The spirit of Christian brotherhood, however, was satisfied only with the largest expression of fellowship that was at any given time attainable; and, without prejudice to the competence of smaller assemblies, the notion of the principal assembly, in which all members of the community were normally expected to take part, was clearly enough defined.<sup>12</sup> It was almost

<sup>10</sup> "Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth;" "unto the Church of the Thessalonians;"—cf. "unto the Churches of Galatia."

<sup>11</sup> Col. 4:15; Philem. 2.

<sup>12</sup> From 1 Cor. 11:18, 20, 22 it is clear that all the members of the community were accustomed to assemble ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ, or ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, for

exclusively in connection with the principal assembly that the idea of Church offices was developed and the function of the officers was defined.

### § 13, CONDUCT OF THE ASSEMBLY

The most of our information about the character of the assembly for instruction we owe to the highly suggestive hints of 1 Cor. 14. This passage is peculiarly liable to misinterpretation, and to derive thence a correct picture of the normal conduct of the assembly requires the most cautious criticism. In the first place, the picture is incomplete, for St. Paul had occasion to notice only those elements of the service in respect to which a tendency to exaggeration and disorder was manifested. In the second place, the high colors in which the picture of the Corinthian assembly is painted require some abatement, if we would represent to ourselves the character of the normal assembly. The abatement, however, touches only the question of orderliness, not at all that of freedom; that is, the liberty of general participation in the service. Certain of the spiritual gifts were everywhere liable to abuse: in the Church at Corinth the abuse had become so flagrant as to call for the intervention of the apostle. Prophecy and tongues were especially abused, but so also was the gift of teaching in general. Tongues, unless they were interpreted, the apostle would exclude entirely from the assembly,

the Lord's Supper — hence it is that people out of every social class were to be found in that assembly (*vv.* 21, 22). Likewise in 14:23 it is implied that "the whole Church" was regularly accustomed to assemble for instruction. It was in the principal assembly the disorders here referred to arose, and it is to that assembly the apostle's ordinances (14:26 sq.) applied.

as not conducive to edification; and in any case he would limit these enthusiastic manifestations to "two or at the most three" in any one assembly, with the requisition that the speeches be not uttered all at once, but in turn, accompanied severally by their interpretations (*v.* 27). Highly as St. Paul valued the edifying gift of prophecy, he would limit the prophetic addresses likewise to "two or three" (*v.* 29) in every assembly, in order that less gifted teachers, and others who possessed various edifying gifts, might also have a turn. The prophets are also exhorted to show such consideration for one another as they had evidently not showed in the past, by yielding place to the next in order that claimed to have a revelation.

These highly gifted members were disposed to use their gifts tyrannically, monopolizing among them the whole time of the assembly, and yielding with a bad grace to others even who claimed the like exalted endowments. St. Paul reminds them (*c.* 12) that all gifts and ministries in the Church — of whatever sort they be, however notable or however humble — are wrought by one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally as he will. He impresses upon them the fact that as members of a body each has need of the other, that every organ performs a function which is necessary to the welfare of the whole and conducive to the proper operation of each several part; therefore none can dispense with the other, none dare boast himself above the other, — for "if they were all one member, where were the body?" He encourages them to "desire the greater gifts," yet one quality which has no element of the miraculous about it he praises as "a still more excellent way;" namely, love, the indispensable condition of unity and order — which

“vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly.” Finally (14:26-31), he proposes definite rules of procedure which are intended to insure the free participation of each, and the edification of all.

It emerges clearly from this whole account that the freedom of every member to contribute according to his gifts to the edification of the assembly was in theory absolutely unrestricted. In the Church at Corinth many were as a matter of fact debarred from the exercise of their privilege by the abuse of this very freedom on the part of the prophets and others. But this only makes it the more evident that there was no officer in the assembly empowered to appoint the speakers, or even to “recognize” them and call to order. This is as much as to say, there was no presiding officer at all. But more than this, the *assembly* itself had no right to repress any member who would exercise his gifts. Hence the perplexity of the problem that was raised by the actual abuse of liberty. The most significant thing we have to note in this whole passage is St. Paul’s way of dealing with the difficulty. Strong as was his insistence upon *order*, he did not suffer this aim to beguile him into any act or counsel which might be construed as an encroachment upon *liberty*. On the contrary, such regulations as he does propose are calculated to protect *all* in the practical exercise of the liberty which they theoretically enjoyed. For St. Paul, liberty and order are not incompatible ideas: rather are they correlates, since the liberty here in question is simply the liberty to follow the promptings of God’s Spirit in the exercise of the gifts which he bestows, and “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.”



Disorder — the abuse of liberty — was doubtless peculiar in some measure to the Church at Corinth, but liberty of participation in the exercises of the assembly was evidently a principle which St. Paul maintained in all the Churches of his founding. There is evidence that the custom of the Jewish-Christian Churches was the same. And even where the more exalted spiritual gifts were rare or unknown this liberty was apt to occasion inconvenience, — for example, through the desire of many to assume the honor and function of the teacher. This is the case St. James contemplates when he exhorts the brethren (3:1), “Be not many teachers.” By the fact that he appeals directly to the individuals who are inclined to abuse the patience of the assembly, impressing upon them the solemnity of the obligations they assume in taking upon themselves so high a function, and the danger of condemnation they incur through indiscretions of speech, he implies that there is no power in the congregation to restrict the liberty of teaching. St. Paul, too, appeals solely to the individuals that cause the trouble: he assumes no power on the part of the assembly to repress them, and lays down no formal rule that might operate to restrict their liberty; but he exhorts them to *self-repression*, and enforces the obligations of the *moral* law which bids them have respect to the gifts of others as members together of one body. In this connection he reminds the prophets that they are not driven to speak by an irresistible impulse — for (14: 32, 33) “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,” and “God is not a God of confusion, but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints.” The imposition of any formal restriction upon those who would exercise the gift of teaching is prohibited by

a fundamental doctrinal consideration. For the gift of teaching in all its phases — the psalm, the teaching, the revelation, the tongue, and the interpretation — is a gift of God's Spirit, and all that teach speak authoritatively as on God's behalf. The consciousness of the whole early period is aptly expressed in 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speaketh, [let him speak] as it were oracles of God."

It appears, however, that in some parts there was a disposition to affirm that the assembly had authority to abridge freedom of speech in the interests of order and edification. Even at Corinth the apostle has to say to the assembly (16:39), "Forbid not to speak with tongues," — while at the same time he finds it necessary to limit the use of this gift so far as possible by moral suasion. St. Paul appears again as the champion of liberty in his warning to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 5:19, 20): "Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesyings." It might be said, indeed, that the authority the assembly claimed to exercise was not a quenching of the Spirit in contempt of true prophecy, but only the repression of those that falsely claimed the gift. The suspicion could not be suppressed that not all the spirits that were manifested in the Christian assemblies were of God. But the practical issue was settled by the apostle in 1 Cor. 12:2, where he lays down the thesis that the presumption is in favor of the prophets and teachers, since they speak in the name of the Lord Jesus — for "no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit."

At the same time, the assembly is not condemned to mere passivity, nor to unquestioning reception of the doctrine of its authoritative teachers. All must

be left free to speak—but having heard the discourses, then is the time to prove the spirits, whether they are of God. In 1 Thess. 5:21, St. Paul not merely permits but enjoins the testing or proving of prophets and their revelations. So too in 1 Cor. 14:29, after the prophets have spoken, he says, “Let the others discriminate.” If the prophets must stand the test of this scrutiny before their word is received as the word of God, how much more the teachers who boast a lesser gift. It is not the teachers alone that are free, nor does their liberty of speech constitute a right to tyrannize in the name of God over the assembly: the assembly acts with equal freedom in accepting or rejecting the messages even of the prophets, and in so doing, it, too, acts not according to arbitrary liking, but in virtue of a spiritual gift that is common to all in some measure, namely, “the discerning of spirits.”<sup>1</sup>

It is manifest that every form of legal organization or of legally prescribed order is incompatible with the absolute freedom that was enjoyed in the early Christian assemblies. But it is quite a different question whether order *per se* is incompatible with such liberty. We carelessly assume that the two conceptions are contradictory, but the assumption will not bear examination. It is not necessary, however, to argue the general question, for we are here dealing with a particular case. We must conceive of *order* in the most general terms

<sup>1</sup> In 1 Cor. 12:10 this is mentioned among the gifts which distinguish one Christian from another, equipping the members for the performance of their various functions in the one body. But in 14:29 it seems to be assumed that “discernment” is a function which all are capable of exercising—cf. 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:1-6. Certain it is that the *reception*, without which no teaching could gain currency or authority in the Church, must depend upon the express or tacit consent of all—that is, practically, of an overwhelming majority.

(excluding all notion of law, formal prescription, or authoritative compulsion); but on the other hand the *liberty* here in question is qualified by a very important condition; namely, that it is exercised in response to the promptings of God's Spirit and solely in the employment of spiritual gifts. If we accept these "gifts" at their Christian valuation, and do not account them a manifestation of deluded enthusiasm, we have to recognize the force of St. Paul's postulate, that "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace;" and this justifies us in sharing his conviction that perfect freedom for the exercise of *all* the gifts divinely bestowed upon the Ecclesia is the only way to attain the order that is conformable to God's will. We have here, not the conception of liberty without rule (which is license), but liberty under the rule of God alone.

We can see now more plainly than when the matter was first discussed that the divine organization which is given in the charismatic endowments of the Church can never be a legal organization. There is only one element entering into it that can in any wise be construed as constituting a formal right — a right inherent in an office as such. It was altogether natural that the assembly should come to recognize certain of its members as permanently endowed with particular gifts for instruction. But fundamentally the recognition was understood to apply, not to the teachers themselves, but to their immediate utterances. And though the popular recognition of this or that man as prophet, evangelist, or teacher, must have vastly increased the presumption in favor of his teaching, the spiritual assembly was theoretically as free as ever to exercise the gift of discernment for the reception or rejection of the doctrine proposed to it.



The lively competition in the exercise of spiritual gifts which was manifested in the Church at Corinth we have good reason to consider exceptional. There were doubtless Churches that needed not so much to be cautioned about the abuse of their gifts as exhorted to the use of them.<sup>2</sup> And even in Corinth, participation in the instruction of the assembly was not so general as St. Paul's phrases are apt to suggest — or as he himself desired. When the apostle urges the Corinthians to "desire earnestly spiritual gifts" (14 : 1), it is implied that all did not possess them, and consequently were not equipped for any active part in the assembly. The ordinances that he proposes in 14 : 26–31 were expressly designed to protect *all* in the exercise of their privilege: but it is evident that all did not avail themselves of the opportunity. It is evident, too, that in a single assembly all could not find turn to speak. If the prophets were to speak only by two or three in each assembly, less gifted teachers were surely not expected to present themselves in greater number. When St. Paul says (*v.* 31), "Ye can *all* prophesy one by one," he does not expect all the prophets to speak in the same assembly, and still less does he give us to infer that all the disciples in Corinth were prophets. He encourages them all to desire "the greater gifts" (12 : 31) and especially the gift of prophecy (14 : 1, 39): but at the same time he recognizes that prophecy is actually a distinctive gift in the community (12 : 10), and in 12 : 29 he asks rhetorically, "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" Prophecy was doubtless a rare gift even in the Corinthian Church,

<sup>2</sup> We have this exhortation, for instance, in 1 Peter 4 : 10, "according as each hath received a gift (χάρισμα), ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold bounty (χάριτος) of God."

and the lower gifts of teaching were very far indeed from being universal. St. Paul does not deny the presence of the prophetic gift in women (11:5), nor altogether forbid the exercise of it;—only, “in the assembly” (14:34) seemly order requires that they shall not speak at all.

St. Paul teaches that the Ecclesia (the Assembly) is divinely organized through the gifts of God’s Spirit,—“dividing to each one severally as he will.” But these several functions do not *necessarily* express themselves in what we should call offices. Just in proportion as the spiritual life of the community is active and general, official distinctions must be less marked. The ever widening gulf that separated clergy and laity in a later age was due as much to lay indifference as to priestly arrogance. If all were active in the exercise of this or the other gift for the edification of the community, *all* would be officers, and the conception of office in general would be vague for lack of contrast. If all prophesied, there would be no “prophets”—that is to say, in less paradoxical terms, there would be no such office or distinction as this name implies. It is because apostles and prophets<sup>3</sup> were rare in the Church, that they were clearly distinguished by the name of their office (cf. 1 Cor. 12:28). There were also minor gifts of teaching, which were less rare and less striking: hence the name “teacher,” which was employed for the rank next below the prophets, did not so definitely indicate an office. As we shall see subsequently, the gift of teaching was implied in all the offices of the Church.<sup>4</sup> Other gifts there were, whether of teaching or of ministry (Rom. 12:7), which tardily or never gave rise to dis-

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. 4:11 adds “evangelists.”

<sup>4</sup> Ephes. 4:11 associates “pastors and teachers.”

tinctions of office.<sup>5</sup> The lack of a name for an office implies that the distinction was not yet made.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It is natural that the gifts that were prominently exercised in the assembly itself should be the first to give rise to distinctions of office. The official stand of the members would be marked by their place and function in the assembly. Other gifts there were which were no less important to the community, and certainly no less divine in their origin, yet manifested primarily in a more private sphere — such perhaps were the “helps,” “guidances,” “gifts of healing,” etc. Cf. Rom. 12:7, 8 — “ministry,” “he that giveth,” “he that showeth mercy.” The possessors of these serviceable gifts came only gradually to occupy a place in the *assembly* beside the inspired *teachers*. The list in Ephes. 4:11 marks a development of official categories: after apostles and prophets it ranks “evangelists” (probably men like Timothy and Titus), and it classes together “pastors and teachers.” This passage represents that the pastoral office, like every other, is constituted by the impartation of a divine charisma, and the conjunction of the titles pastor and teacher (in this context) shows that teaching was the principal gift and function of this office also. It was with the divine word the pastor was to feed the flock. On the other hand, the name certainly indicates a sort of practical service that did not belong to the teaching office as such; and if the figure of the shepherd is to be taken seriously it cannot but suggest a sphere of activity *outside* the assembly, — *e. g.* wise counsels (*κυβερνήσεις*) and practical ministrations (*ἀντιλήψεις*) to individuals, and oversight of the community at large. Speaking and ministering are the two generic conceptions under which 1 Peter 4:11 classes all the gifts that are supplied to the Church by the manifold bounty of God. The particular example of administration mentioned in this context is “hospitality” (v. 9). Also in Rom. 12:7 St. Paul contrasts “ministry” and “teaching;” and passing from the enumeration of the more distinctive spiritual gifts to the ordinary, but no less important, manifestations of Christian life, he mentions particularly “hospitality,” and “communicating to the necessities of the saints” (v. 13). In 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:8 it is required of a candidate for the office of bishop that

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<sup>6</sup> This is unqualifiedly true, if we are considering the formal distinctions of office. Jeremy Taylor asserted the postulate that an office might exist without a distinctive name, or even under the name of another office — he had in mind particularly the office of bishop as existing under the name of the presbyter’s office. This is substantially the position that Gore and Wordsworth maintain to-day. And this dictum is also true, *if we have respect solely to the endowment* — not to the *office* properly so called. It is only, however, by confounding these two ideas that the argument of these writers can be kept on its feet.

In Rom. 12 : 6 sq. St. Paul starts out as though he were going to give a list of the divers gifts that are bestowed upon the disciples as members of one body. But as a matter of fact he passes by an easy transition from the gifts themselves to the *functions* which they enable the members to perform—evidently for the reason that there were no names generally in use to denote the less distinctive gifts, for example, that of liberality. In 1 Cor. 12 : 8–10, he carries through an enumeration—by no means a complete one—of the *gifts*, describing them, however, in such a way as to suggest again that they were not all of them definitely enough distinguished to have acquired distinctive and well established *names*. Further on in the same chapter (*v.* 28) the apostle starts out by naming the *officers*

he be “given to hospitality.” We can well understand that one who was preëminent for his hospitality would acquire a high and leading place in the community—especially if, like Gaius in Rom. 16 : 22, he might be described as “the host of the whole Church.” In 1 Cor. St. Paul lays great stress upon the practical gifts of ministry, though they were not yet thought of as inhering in a particular office. He himself, however, by such an exhortation as he gives in 1 Cor. 16 : 15, 16, clearly prepared the way for the official recognition (in a leading capacity) of such persons as were preëminently devoted to the social service of the community—“Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and *that they have laid themselves out to minister unto the saints*), that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that *helpeth in the work and laboreth*.” The equipment for such service as the house of Stephanas performed might be either natural endowments, or worldly goods, or—rather *and*—the spiritual gift which prompts to expressions of fellowship. The New Testament does not discriminate sharply between these conceptions: all were gifts of God (‘Talents’ in the sense of Jesus’ parable) and the brethren were bound to minister them among themselves, as good stewards of the manifold bounty of God.—Certain of the gifts *never* gave rise to offices, nor appeared as necessary constituents of them,—either because they were occasional (that is, not constantly manifested in the same persons), or because they were not highly accounted of as ministering to edification. In the case of “tongues” both of these reasons combine to explain why there was no corresponding *office*.



whom God hath "set in the Church." He names, "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" — but there the enumeration of officers stops, *because there were no other officers*. Regarded as the offices here are from the point of view of the gifts which constitute them, the office of "teacher" is broad enough to include that of pastor or bishop: for whatever other gifts ("helps" and "governments" perhaps) were requisite to this latter office, that of teaching was the chief and properly the constitutive one. But the organization of the body of Christ is not completely described by mention of the offices that were formally recognized: therefore the apostle completes his enumeration by mentioning the spiritual gifts and the informal functions that correspond to them — "then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, guidances, kinds of tongues." He makes the same transition in *v.* 29: "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers?" — then, "are all (workers of) miracles? have all gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" Evidently there were no *officers* in the Church who might be described as interpreters<sup>7</sup> as speakers of tongues, as healers, as helpers, as pilots (or counsellors).<sup>8</sup>

The above is calculated to show that the charismatic endowments of the Church were not by natural necessity the occasion of disorder; but on the contrary that they tended by degrees to develop a very definite order, and ultimately an official organization. Even the stage

<sup>7</sup> The word interpreter might of course be used — as in 1 Cor. 14:28, — but not in a list of Church officers.

<sup>8</sup> On this word see Hort, *Op. cit.* p. 159. The word "miracles" (*δυνάμεις*) is used in this latter list as though it were the name of an office, and it is hardly to be explained except as an attempt (immediately afterwards relinquished) to make the list uniform by naming throughout only the titles of the *persons* that possessed the various gifts.

of development depicted in 1 Cor. is not without formal elements of order: for instance, in the restriction of the various *classes* of teachers to a definite number in each assembly, and each class — so it appears — to a definite sequence. St. Paul tells us more about the disorder of the Corinthian assembly than about its order, and within certain limits one is left free to picture as one will the character of divine service in that age. Where little can be proved, we may at least note that it is not inconsistent with the data furnished in 1 Cor. to imagine that even at that time and in Corinth there might have been a pretty well established frame-work — order of service — within which the freest exercise of the spiritual gifts was still possible.

It needs to be asserted again and again that the exercise of spiritual gifts constituted no antithesis to a traditionally established order, — whether it be an orderly organization that is in question, or a liturgical order. The early and uniform development of liturgical order in the Catholic Church is an historic fact with which we have to reckon when we study the character of divine service in the preceding period. If primitive Christianity had started — like the sect of Quakers — with a theoretical repudiation of all formal order, if as a matter of principle it had set its face against the establishment of traditional customs (the regular recurrence of accustomed forms) as inconsistent with spiritual freedom, it is certain that the Catholic liturgies would never have been developed, — or at least not without such a protest as must have rent the Church. This development, again, would have been equally impossible had the early Church held the rigid view of inspiration — the precise opposite of the above — which is illustrated by the extremer sects of Scotch

Presbyterians, who boast no "tongues," no "prophecy," no genuine "gift" of teaching, and yet admit no formal elements of public worship except such as are taken from the Bible — no hymns but the Psalms of David, no prayers derived from "uninspired" sources, except such as may be accounted the extempore production of the speaker, with a preference for an artificial mosaic "composed chiefly in the words of Holy Scripture." The early Church was more in earnest about its "gifts" of teaching (including prayer) than are our modern evangelicals, and more consistent than are the Quakers. The "psalm" or prayer that was uttered by a prophet or a teacher was to-morrow or the year after accounted no less "spiritual" (inspired or gifted in whatever degree it might be), no less worthy as an expression of public devotion, than upon the occasion when it was first uttered; and if it was a studied composition, a work of some poetic or literary art which the memory could easily retain, it might be rehearsed frequently in the assembly, and so, undergoing gradual changes as it passed from mouth to mouth, with the sanction of popular reception and common use, it might become a recognized formula of public worship. In short, the high estimation in which the spiritual gifts were held was anything but hostile to the development of liturgical forms.

#### § 14, PRAYER AND PRAISE

The constituent parts of Christian worship are in one place or another pretty fully enumerated by St. Paul, and in 1 Cor. 14 : 26 he seems to give us a clue to their relation in orderly sequence. It is a short list which he here gives (a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue,

an interpretation), but it must be regarded rather as highly generalized than as incomplete.

The "psalm," a specific form of prayer, may here be taken to represent prayer in general. Ephes. 5 : 19 and Col. 3 : 16 distinguish three varieties of poetical utterance: "psalms, hymns, spiritual songs."<sup>1</sup> Here again they are regarded as the expression of spiritual gifts: they are all alike described as "spiritual;" and in the latter passage it is expressly said that they are uttered "by grace" (ἐν χάριτι), while a relation is furthermore implied with "the word of Christ," concerning which the apostle prays that it may dwell in the disciples richly with all wisdom. Regarded as specific varieties of *prayer*, these three parts — psalms, hymns, and songs — are all alike expressions of thanksgiving or praise, in distinction from petition. How various must have been the material with which they dealt, and how lively their reference to the personal experiences of the Christian life, we may gather from the following verse — "and whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks to God the Father through him.*" But this same passage also gives us the interesting hint that Christian psalmody might be adapted to fulfil the specific ends of *teaching* — "teaching and admonishing one another with psalms," etc. In a more general sense there is no doubt that prayer in all its forms was regarded as a manifestation of the teaching gift, an expression of the in-dwelling word of Christ (cf. Col. 3 : 16).

In 1 Cor. 14 : 14, 15, St. Paul distinguishes the two sorts of prayer, petition and praise — *προσεύχεσθαι* and *ψάλλειν*. Both are spiritual manifestations (like

<sup>1</sup> ψαλμοί, ὕμνοι, ᾠδαί, — the adjective πνευματικός, I take it, qualifies them all.



the "tongues"), yet none the less exercises of the understanding. In the following verse the prayer of "blessing" (εὐλογεῖν)<sup>2</sup> is evidently used as the equivalent of "thanksgiving" (εὐχαριστεῖν); and in this connection we have the interesting notice that the brethren were accustomed to express their participation in the prayer by responding with "the Amen."<sup>3</sup> That St. Paul mentions only the psalm in 1 Cor. 14:26 may be due to the fact that prayers of thanksgiving and praise greatly preponderated in the assembly, though prayers of petition were also in use.<sup>4</sup>

One may say that prayer, more than any other act that took place in the assembly, can be assumed as a matter of course.<sup>5</sup> It is all the more significant, there-

<sup>2</sup> The *blessing of God* is meant, as in the Jewish blessing at meals, and similarly in the supreme Eucharistic blessing of the Church.

<sup>3</sup> The Amen seems to have been associated especially with doxologies. Cf. von der Goltz, *Das Gebet in der ältesten Christenheit*, 1901, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> The prayer of petition, moreover, required no special spiritual endowment, nor any such careful preparation as did the psalm. It required only the simplest expression—indeed it properly *admitted* of no more. The early "bidding prayer" (and the later litanies) better comports with the straightforward simplicity of petition than do the Latin collects. On the other hand, the whole wealth of spiritual rhetoric was lavished upon the expressions of Christian praise, doxology, and thanksgiving. The preponderance of praise over prayer in the early liturgies probably reflects the relative importance attributed to these respective elements of worship in the primitive assembly. In the course of the Middle Ages this proportion was gradually reversed; and to-day the Protestant Churches no less than the Catholic display a decided preponderance in their public worship of the element of petition. This tendency is only partially offset by our modern hymns, since they too partake largely of the same character.—Prayer and Thanksgiving are associated and yet contrasted in Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:18; 1 Tim. 2:1. We have emphatic exhortation to thanksgiving in Ephes. 5:20; Col. 2:7; 3:15-17.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Weizsäcker, *op. cit.* p. 556. In 1 Cor. 11:4 Paul mentions the praying man along with the prophesying man; he contrasts (14:15) the spiritual prayer uttered in a tongue, with the prayer that is intelligible to the congregation. He exhorts (Rom. 12:12) the congregation as such to steadfast continuance in prayer. In certain cases he speaks

fore, that in giving a list of the contributions to the assembly which are especially conditioned by spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 14 : 26), the apostle mentions only the most formal variety of prayer ; namely, the psalm. It is very important to observe that extempore utterance was accounted no criterion of the spirituality of prayer. The psalm was a variety of prayer which preëminently required the coöperation of the understanding (1 Cor. 14 : 16) : the name indicates a close analogy with the Psalms of Scripture, and hence implies that considerable literary art must have been exercised in its composition. The passage further implies that on coming to the assembly each was already prepared to contribute his psalm. On the other hand, it was not merely an Old Testament Psalm, to be read or recited from memory to the assembly : the fundamental idea here is that each contribution is the product of the individual *gift* of one or another of the disciples, therefore each must have offered a psalm of his own composition, either himself singing it before the assembly (v. 15), or imparting it in some other way. It lay in the nature of the case that a selection would gradually be made of such psalms as proved worthy of a permanent place in the common worship. Such an act of selection, however spontaneous and natural, must be regarded as one of the spiritual functions of the assembly as a whole. Furthermore, what was originally contributed to a par-

in such wise of dealing with a matter in prayer, that only common prayer in the assembly can be thought of, — as Rom. 15 : 30 ; 2 Cor. 1 : 11 ; 9 : 12-14. It appears in part from these passages, as also from 1 Cor. 11 : 4, that prayer in the congregation is not confined to persons specially delegated to that function, but can be performed by any member, corresponding in this to the custom in the Synagogue. As a rule, therefore, the prayer was a free one, like the other contributions to the edification of the assembly.

ticular congregation, attained in time to a more general *reception*, and thus Christian psalmody — or, more generally, the Christian liturgy — was consolidated.

G. We do not altogether lack examples of such early Christian psalms. Weizsäcker (*op. cit.* pp. 557 sq.) supposes with good reason that several of the “odes” incorporated in the Apocalypse were originally in current use in the Church. The suggestion is the more plausible when we recognize that the heavenly worship depicted in the Apocalypse is in many respects the counterpart of the Lord’s Day service of the Christian assembly on earth. Though this picture of a divine service in heaven (cc. 4–10) does not inform us either fully or precisely about the character of early Christian worship, it is exceedingly valuable as a supplement to 1 Cor. — a supplement which corrects in some respects the impression one is apt to receive from the hints of that epistle. It depicts a solemn and formal worship which is at the same time the expression of the utmost spontaneity. In the congregation each member occupies his due place (4:4, 6; 5:11; 7:9); and the service itself is developed in orderly sequence. It would be rash to follow the analogy in great detail, but in the main the order seems to correspond with that of 1 Cor. 14:26. First an opening psalm of praise (4:8–11); then the opening of the “book” (5:1 sq.), that is, the lections from the Old Testament, — which St. Paul does not mention because the mere *reading* was not an exercise of a spiritual gift. This part of the service, however, can be understood almost as a matter of course (cf. Weizsäcker, pp. 571 sq.); and it may explain why in St. Paul’s enumeration teaching *precedes* prophecy, for it is probable that the former was occupied chiefly with the interpretation of the passages that were read. It seems as though seven lections were here indicated, but the mystical number is hardly significant of the actual practice. The fact that the interpretations are here all of a prophetic character is explained by the character of the book. There can be no doubt that the Old Testament Psalms, like the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole, were commonly in use in the Church, and it is likely that they are included

under the "spiritual psalms, hymns and songs" mentioned in Ephes. and Col. "The prayers of the saints" are representatively offered to God on two occasions (5:8; 8:3, 4); and the whole service is interspersed, or rather bound together, by songs of praise (ᾠδὴ), which are rendered responsively by various choirs—that is, by the different classes of human and angelic creatures that compose the assembly. This latter feature—the mode of rendering the musical parts of the service—we can confidently recognize as a reflection of the practice of the Church—the more especially as it agrees with the earliest direct testimony on this subject, viz. Pliny's report that the Christians were accustomed *carmenque Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem*. This orderly and even formal service is evidently regarded by the author as the ideal of Christian worship; and if a similar order was not actually realized in the Church, it was not because the school of John or the school of Paul was unfavorable to it.

Weizsäcker remarks that the short songs incorporated in the introduction to the vision (Rev. cc. 4–10) only once allude particularly to the situation there depicted (viz. the reference in 5:9 to the opening of the book with the seven seals), while for the rest they display in the most general terms the character of the Church's praise to God and to Christ, the Lamb. First we have the song of the four living creatures (4:8):

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord! God, the Omnipotent!  
which was and which is and which is to come!

In response to this the four and twenty elders sing (4:11):

Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God,  
to receive the glory and the honor and the power:  
for Thou didst create all things,  
and because of Thy will they were, and were created.

Next the four cherubim and the four and twenty elders sing together before the Lamb "a new song" (5:9, 10):

Worthy art Thou to take the Book,  
and to open the seals thereof:  
for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with  
Thy blood



men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,  
and madest them unto our God a kingdom and priests,  
and they reign upon the earth.

Then all the heavenly hosts answer with a great voice (5:12):

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain,  
to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might,  
and honor, and glory, and blessing.

And finally all creatures in heaven and earth (5:13):

Unto Him that sitteth on the throne  
and unto the Lamb,  
the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the domin-  
ion  
to the ages of the ages.

And the cherubim respond, Amen.

Of like general character is the song of the victors in the  
fight with the beast, which is called "the song of Moses the  
servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (15:3, 4):

Great and marvelous are Thy works,  
O Lord God, the Omnipotent;  
righteous and true are Thy ways,  
King of the ages.  
Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name?  
For Thou only art holy;  
for all nations shall come and worship before Thee;  
for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest.

Similar to the above is also one of the songs interspersed in the  
course of the prophecy (11:15-18). "Great voices" are heard  
in heaven, saying:

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our  
Lord and of His Christ:  
and He shall reign unto the ages of the ages.

Then the four and twenty elders respond:

We give thanks unto Thee, Lord, God, the Omnipotent,  
which art and which wast;  
because Thou hast taken Thy great power, and didst reign.  
And the nations were wroth,  
then came Thy wrath,

and the time for the dead to be judged,  
and to give their reward to Thy servants,  
to the prophets and to the saints  
and to them that fear Thy Name,  
the small and the great,  
and to destroy them that destroy the earth.

Weizsäcker supposes that the psalms attributed in the third Gospel to Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon were also taken from the psalter of the Church. But in any case they may be taken to illustrate the character of early Christian psalmody. We may be sure that this Hebrew form of sacred poesy was universally adopted in the Gentile Churches, for the same character is impressed upon all the hymns of the Catholic liturgies. The fundamental tone of Christian worship is represented by these psalms of praise. In the midst of heavy toil and tribulation the dominant feeling was thankfulness for God's gracious gifts, confidence in the ultimate victory, and glad expectancy of the divine consummation.

Among the ancient hymns which are still in use, there is none perhaps that reflects so perfectly both the form and spirit of apostolic psalmody as the *Gloria in excelsis*, which, in its original form, as the morning hymn of the Eastern Churches, can be traced back to the early part of the second century. But if we can disabuse our minds of the hard and fast distinction we now make between hymns and prayers, we shall be able to recognize that certain of the *prayers* of the liturgy are at least closely akin to the early Christian psalms. Prayer is an exalted mood, and in all its parts, but especially in the part of praise it demands exalted expression. What we vaguely call liturgical language is to be regarded as a variety of sacred poetry. Prayer is ever the most spontaneous variety of poetry, but in thanksgiving to God for his unspeakable gift in Christ Jesus it reaches an exalted mood which is only to be satisfied by musical expression. This is true especially of the thanksgiving or Eucharist *par excellence*: the prayer of "blessing" at the sacramental meal of the Church, which is the most ancient constituent of the liturgy, and retains in the main its original form, in spite of the medieval misapprehension of its spirit and inten-

tion. The prayer *as a whole* may properly be regarded as a psalm, notwithstanding that the greater part is recited by the leader alone. There is no part of the Church's worship which more plainly demands musical utterance, and the prejudice of the Reformed Churches in prescribing the prosaic utterance of all prayers by the officiating minister nowhere appears so narrow, so plainly unjustifiable, as here. One cannot fail to note the likeness between this great Eucharistic prayer and the "Odes" quoted above from the Apocalypse: it is conceived in the very spirit, and expressed in the very form, of early Christian psalmody. First comes the *Sursum corda*, the responsive song of priest and people; next the psalm uttered by the priest as representative of all; then the doxology of priest and people together — the *Ter sanctus*. This so-called Preface at least is still appropriately intoned with formal melody by the Lutheran and a considerable part of the Anglican, as well as by the Roman and Greek Churches. But properly this is only the beginning of the Eucharistic prayer, which rises ever *in crescendo* to the supreme note of thanksgiving at the beginning of the Canon (the "All glory be to thee" of the English liturgy), where the redemption of the world through the sacrifice of Christ is commemorated (including a recital of his institution of the sacrament). The unity of the Eucharistic prayer has been destroyed and its significance obscured by the separation of the Canon from the Preface. The separation never was formally expressed in the *text* of the Eastern liturgies, and the arrangement of the Roman Missal was occasioned in the first place merely by the introduction of the "proper prefaces": but for all that, theory and practice combined to make the distinction a very marked one. Having lost the idea that the blessing or thanksgiving (the blessing of *God* being always understood) was itself the sole and sufficient consecration, the Eastern Churches added an express prayer of consecration, together with other *petitions* that interrupted the pure note of praise; and the Latin Church came to regard the words of institution as a magic formula of consecration. The result is, that the Canon is universally regarded, not as a continuation of the prayer of thanksgiving, but as an historical recitation (if not a magic formula),

followed by various petitions. The whole of it is consequently recited *secrete*, or at least in a "tone" different from that of the Preface. The present English liturgy (since 1552) separates the two parts of the Eucharistic prayer more formally and definitely than does any other use. The "prayer of humble access," which is inserted in the very midst of it, breaks the continuity of thanksgiving, and after it the tone of praise, if it be resumed at all in the Canon, must perforce be pitched many notes lower. The Catholic misapprehension of the Canon is ultimately responsible for the fact that the Reformed Churches have lost the idea of the Eucharistic prayer altogether, and recite the account of the institution of the sacrament not as a part of thanksgiving, but merely as a Scripture lesson. As such it is by many accounted essential to the rite — though upon what grounds, it would be hard to say. This notion seems to be admitted, and it is certainly not excluded, by the so-called Lambeth Quadrilateral.

## § 15, THE GIFT OF TEACHING

So far as concerns the problem of Church organization and the character of the Christian ministry, the chief interest of the foregoing discussion lies in the fact that prayer and praise, the components of worship, were the expression of individual *gifts*, — that is, either supernatural endowments or natural talents, as we should distinguish them; but spiritual manifestations both of them, according to the early conception; the gracious gifts of God (*charismata*) for the edification of the Ecclesia. The gift that was expressed in the worship of the assembly may be denominated the gift of *teaching*, to use the word in its most general sense. The most general antithesis to this is the gift of *ministry*, under which category we may class all the remaining charismata, the practical gifts of miracles, healings, helps, etc. It was the teaching gift alone, though in various manifesta-



tions, that came to expression in the assembly. The gift of teaching, taken in a specific sense, is distinguished by St. Paul from the gift of prophecy, as well as from the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation; and yet it is evident that all of these parts, which are enumerated in 1 Cor. 14 : 26 as contributions to the instruction of the assembly, may be regarded as various expressions of a general gift of teaching. No otherwise is it in the case of the "psalm," which is the only other contribution mentioned in this passage: the whole tenor of St. Paul's treatment of the subject proves that this, too, was regarded as an expression of the gift of teaching, and we may accept this conclusion with the greater assurance because no mention is made of a specific *gift* of psalmody. That is to say, the worship of the Church, no less than the instruction, was conducted by men who were accounted teachers in the assembly — "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (in the narrower sense) — and the right they had to such leadership was solely in virtue of their teaching gifts.

I have used the title "Conduct of the Assembly" for lack of a better one, but of course it must not be taken to imply that in the stage of development depicted in 1 Cor. there was any formally constituted *conductor* of the proceedings: the assembly evidently conducted itself, under the informal leadership of such persons as possessed the gifts of teaching.<sup>1</sup>

But when there did come to be developed a formal presidency in the assembly — that is, when the bishops acquired the presidency in the assembly for instruction as well as in that for the Eucharist — it must have been, partly at least, in view of his teaching gifts that such

<sup>1</sup> But for the bishop's function of leadership in the *Eucharistic* assembly, see § 21.

an officer was chosen. Indeed, the presidency must have been conceded only to such as possessed the *highest* gifts which were at the time available in the local community. It was a fundamental and deeply rooted conception in the Church, that all leadership, all authority, belonged to the teaching gift, the teaching office, as such: hence, even at the beginning of the second century, the ordinary president was obliged to give place to any one, such as an apostle or prophet, who boasted higher gifts.<sup>2</sup>

In the course of the following sections it will be showed that all administration in the Church, even the financial administration, belonged as a matter of principle to the teaching office as such. At this point we have only to note that the administration of *worship* — the cultus, if that term may be used for the early period — was a function of the teaching gift, and could be intrusted to no one but a teacher. It is necessary to insist upon this point, because the prevailing theory assumes that worship (the cultus) and teaching are natural contraries, and that the *liturge* of the assembly (the bishop) can be such only by formal (legal) right. Teaching and administration — administration of all sorts, liturgical, disciplinary, financial — are regarded as contrasted functions; and the teaching offices (apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers), regarded as charismatic, are opposed to the administrative (bishops, presbyters, deacons), which are accounted of purely legal constitution.<sup>3</sup> It is represented that the bishops and deacons had no share in teaching; and if this were

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Didache*, x. 7, xi. passim. In xv. 1 the bishops and deacons are to be appointed to perform the ministry of prophets and teachers — that is, when no prophet is present, xiii. 4.

<sup>3</sup> So Hatch, — while Harnack admits that the bishops were chosen not without reference to their charismatic endowments.

so, the consequence could hardly be avoided that the existence of such offices implied from the first a legal organization. The facts, however, do not bear out this claim, for it appears that teaching was ever a prominent function of the bishop's office, and we have seen that even in the conduct of worship he was performing the service of the prophets and teachers.<sup>4</sup>

The various contributions to the edification of the assembly which are enumerated in 1 Cor. 14:26 are all of them functions of the gift of teaching, but we need look for no correspondence in detail between them and the teaching *offices*. There was, for instance, no office charged peculiarly with the composition of prayers and psalms, this being a function which might be discharged by any of the teaching offices. The apostles were equipped with all the spiritual gifts in their fullness: St. Paul therefore could "Pray with the spirit,"

<sup>4</sup> The early age knew nothing of a *jus liturgicum* as belonging to the bishop or to any other officer: it knew only of a liturgical charisma, by virtue of which certain persons — many or few — were empowered to lead the worship of the assembly. When definite liturgical forms began to be fixed by tradition, the higher sort of teachers were still free to exercise their gifts of prayer; but they claimed no right to impose forms of prayer upon others (*jus liturgicum*), free *reception* on the part of the assembly being the only way in which a customary use might be established. Such an use being established, it was no breach of principle (no quenching of the spirit) to enjoin it upon all who were not distinguished by special gifts of prayer. The situation at the beginning of the second century is illustrated by the *Didache*, x. 7: "Permit the prophets, however, to give thanks as much as they will," — that is, instead of following the Eucharistic prayer prescribed for others. To this Harnack flippantly remarks, "In der D. gelten die Propheten als die virtuosen (!) des Dankegebets." The early Catholic bishop had certainly less liberty in this respect than the prophet: his authority over the liturgy must have been limited to such adaptation of the material as the occasion might require — a right which any intelligent leader of worship might be assumed to possess. But it must be remembered that the bishop might do as a prophet or teacher what in virtue of his episcopal office he might not do.

could "sing with the spirit," he gloried in his "visions and revelations," and boasted that he spoke with tongues more than they all, while the gift of teaching in the more specific sense is exemplified in all his epistles. The prophets, too, as we must suppose, though they were named for the highest gift they possessed, must often have exhibited the lower gifts, — namely, tongues, interpretations, and especially teaching. The "teachers" lacked only the power of speaking in the spirit: but this distinguished rather the character of their inspiration than the matter of their discourse, and we must suppose that they were gifted with an aptitude for prayer as well as for all the parts of instruction.

Instruction — whether in a tongue with its interpretation, by revelation, or with the understanding alone — included a great variety of parts. The word "doctrine" (διδάχῃ, διδασκαλία), as it is used in the New Testament and in the later Christian literature, includes of course what we now exclusively denote by that word — that is, theoretical instruction about the nature of God and his relation to the universe, — but it also includes much more. In the theoretical part of doctrine, which we may call theology, St. Paul distinguishes "the word of wisdom" (λόγος σοφίας) and "the word of knowledge" (λόγος γνώσεως).<sup>5</sup> It is not necessary, however, to inquire here into the force of this distinction, for it is not doctrine on its theological or philosophical side that can account for the leading authority of the teaching office over the order and administration of the Church. The words

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. 12: 8. In 14: 6 he distinguishes "knowledge" (γνώσις) as a particular sort of teaching. For the distinction see Weizsäcker's rather inconclusive discussion, *op. cit.* pp. 559 sq.



διδαχὴ and διδασκαλία, commonly translated by “doctrine” in our Authorized Version, denoted teaching in the broadest sense: Christian faith was but one side of this teaching, Christian morals was the other, and under this latter term we have to include the whole doctrine of Church order. Both of these words were used as titles of the Church ordinances of the second and third centuries (Διδαχὴ τοῦ κυρίου διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων, Διδασκαλία τ. ἀπ., κ. τ. λ.), though these writings contain little or no theology, and mingle moral precepts with regulations about worship, government, and discipline. It was characteristic of all the early canonical legislation of the Church that it made no formal distinction between canons relating to faith, morals, and discipline: the distinction is altogether a modern one, it was first made in the decrees of the Council of Trent. The early usage corresponds with the Scriptural conception: the apostolic notion of *doctrine* was exceeding broad, and the doctrine of Church order was an inseparable part of the doctrine of Christian conduct as a whole—or morality (cf. Tit. 2:1 sqq.)

The latter sort of doctrine is intimated in 1 Cor. 4:17, where St. Paul says that he sent Timothy, “who shall put you in remembrance of my ways (ὁδοὺς) in Christ, even as I teach (διδάσκω) everywhere in every Church.” The teaching here has to do with manners and customs; the “ways” (ὁδοί) are the precepts relative thereto. This kind of teaching bears a likeness—certainly not altogether fanciful—to the Jewish *halacha*, its Christian character being here marked by the adjunct “in Christ.” We find the same thing again in the “traditions” (παράδοσεις) which the apostle delivered to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 11:2), and in the

“charges” (παράγγελίαι) which he gave to the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 4:2). Such teaching as this occupies a large place in St. Paul’s epistles, and we may suppose that it constituted still more prominent a part of the instruction imparted in the assemblies. Pliny’s account of the Christian assembly seems to indicate that even in the second century practical moral exhortation was the predominant element of Church instruction: *seque sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, etc.* — for *sacramentum* can here mean nothing else than the binding moral doctrine of the brotherhood.

To understand the practical bearing of the teaching gift upon the minutest details of Church order, we must recognize the *particularity* of early Christian teaching. The highest aspect of the gift of teaching was the ability to impart instruction about the general principles of theology and morality, and it was this that gave the teachers their preëminent place in the assembly — but it was *not* this that gave them authority over the practical administration of the Church. A perfectly consequent outcome, however, of the teaching gift in its highest phase, was the ability to deduce from the general *principles* of morality the particular *precepts* which should regulate the conduct of Christian life in all its details, and then to *apply* these precepts to the individual case and to the particular person. There was no action too insignificant to come within the scope of the teacher’s authority, and no matter so important that it might not be decided by his voice.

This practical exercise of the teaching gift appears, for example,<sup>6</sup> in what St. Paul calls *admonition*

<sup>6</sup> Other and more particular examples are noticed below in this section, — such as designation to office, and the express functions of discipline

(*νουθεσία*). Admonition is merely an instance of the application of moral teaching to a particular case. Examples of St. Paul's admonitions are furnished by his epistles, and we may be sure that they were more frequent and direct when he was present in the midst of the congregations. In this connection, however, it is sufficient to consider his use of the *word*. In Col. 1:28 he represents himself and his fellow apostles as "admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom"—and this as a part of the proclamation of Christ. He apologizes politely for the admonitions which he addresses to the disciples at Rome, recognizing that they "are filled with all *knowledge*, and able also to admonish one another;" but he writes the more boldly because of the *grace* given him of God as a minister of Jesus Christ unto the Gentiles. Admonition was undoubtedly a function of the teaching office: not only is it associated in these passages with *teaching*, but it is regarded as the fruit of *wisdom* and *knowledge*, even as the special outcome of a God-given *grace*. It was exercised, as a matter of course, chiefly by the leaders of the community: so St. Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:12, "We beseech you to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." Admonition is a principal part of the cure of souls, and it is to be exercised consequently in the spirit of gentleness: hence St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:14) "as beloved children."<sup>7</sup> Like every other part of teaching, how-

(excommunication and absolution) which may be conceived of as parts of admonition. The administration of the material or financial concerns of the Church is considered in § 20.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 2 Thess. 3:15. In 2 Tim. 4:2 some of the functions of an authoritative teacher—in this case an evangelist—are enumerated: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

ever, admonition was exercised in virtue of the *gift*, not of the *office*: every member was consequently free to admonish, but the disciplinary effect of the admonition depended in any case upon its *reception* by the assembly; that is, upon the recognition that the reproof was deserved.

Admonition or reproof might, of course, be given in private, but it was only public reproof in the assembly that could have practical disciplinary effect. In 1 Tim. 5: 19, 20 the Evangelist is cautioned to accept no accusation against an elder except on the testimony of two or three witnesses; but this evidence being furnished, the sinning elders are to be reproved "in the sight of all." In 2 Cor. 2: 6 St. Paul says, "Sufficient to such an one is this rebuke by the majority" (ἡ ἐπιτιμία αὐτῇ ἢ ὑπὸ τῶν πλείονων) — that is to say, the majority had assented to the rebuke administered and to the consequent punishment (excommunication). Admonition belonged especially to the spiritually gifted teachers, hence in Gal. 6: 1 it is said, "Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye that are *spiritual* amend him in the spirit of meekness."<sup>8</sup> Yet the whole assembly was thought of as coöperating, and St. Paul therefore exhorts the brethren of Thessalonica in general (1 Thess. 5: 14) to "admonish the disorderly."<sup>9</sup>

exhort, with all longsuffering and *teaching*." — It needs to be observed that exhortation is as much a part of "doctrine" as is admonition or reproof: it is not considered here, only for the reason that it has no relation to discipline—cf. 1 Tim. 4: 13; 5: 1; 6: 2; 2 Tim. 4: 2.

<sup>8</sup> All reproof, and even the extremest punishment (1 Cor. 5: 5), aimed at the amendment or restoration of the offender.

<sup>9</sup> Reproof must have been a usual part of the exercises of the assembly. We learn from the *Didache* that the members in general continued to administer reproof to one another even in the second century: ii. 7, "Thou shalt hate no man, but some reprove, for others pray, etc." iv. 3, "Have no respect for persons in reproofing for sins." xv. 3, "Reprove one another,



We may distinguish two sorts of admonition: first, simple reproof; secondly, admonition to penance, implying exclusion from the Eucharist, later called excommunication.<sup>10</sup> The former might be administered in public as well as in private, as may be seen in the case of St. Paul's famous rebuke of St. Peter (Gal. 2: 14, "I said unto Cephas before all"), as well as in several of the examples cited above. But even private admonition, if unheeded, led to public rebuke and discipline. The latter could be administered only in the assembly, since it depended upon the assent of the Church for its effect. The rule generally followed was that enjoined by the Lord (Matt. 18: 15-18): "If thy brother sin against thee, go, reprove him between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he

not in wrath, but in peace." It was a function, however, which was generally devolved upon those in authority — cf. 2 Tim. 4: 2; Titus 1: 9, 13; 2: 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Didache*, xiv. 2, "If any have a quarrel with his fellow, let him not join you (in the Eucharistic assembly) until they are reconciled, in order that your sacrifice may not be profaned," — cf. Matt. 5: 24. The word "sacrifice" here refers to the prayers. Cf. in the homily *De aleatoribus* falsely ascribed to Cyprian (Harnack, *Texte*, V. 1, p. 19): "in *Doctrinis Apostolorum* (est): se quis frater delinquit in ecclesia et non paret legi, hic non colligatur, donec poenitentiam agat, et non recipiatur, ne inquietur et impediatur oratio vestra," *Didache*, xv. 3, "Reprove one another, not in wrath, but in peace, as ye have it in the Gospel: and whosoever offends his fellow, let no one speak to him, nor let him hear a word from you, until he has repented." According to Justin Martyr (*Apol.* i. c. 66) none but a baptized person "who lives as Christ hath taught" might be admitted to the Eucharist. In order to exclude unrepentant sinners, a public confession of sin preceded the Eucharist — *Didache*, xiv. 1. Exclusion from the Eucharist is the origin of all the later ecclesiastical penalties. The bishop, therefore, as the conductor of the Eucharist (§ 21) came later to have control over Church discipline in general and particularly over excommunication.

refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church (assembly): and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Here the practical exercise of discipline (excommunication) is the consequence of admonitions unheeded. In Titus 3:10 we have the injunction, "A schismatic man after a first and second admonition avoid." Separation from the fellowship of the Church, in the case of any but the most serious offences, was to last only until the culprit should come to a better mind: 2 Thess. 3:14, 15, "And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye may have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. And count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." In 2 Cor. 13:1-3 St. Paul threatens that on his return to Corinth he will exercise severe discipline against offenders ("I will not spare"), and in this connection he recalls the Lord's rule of evidence, "At the mouth of two witnesses or three every word shall be established," cf. 1 Tim. 5:19.

In 1 Cor. 5:3-5 we have a curious and striking confirmation of the above account of Church discipline; it proves at once the absolute authority which the *teacher* claimed in this matter, and the necessity for the coöperation of the *assembly* — the necessity, indeed, that the admonition and discipline be exercised *in the assembly*.<sup>11</sup> This latter condition it is that explains the curious phrasing of the passage. For St. Paul could *not* be present to pronounce his rebuke in the midst of the

<sup>11</sup> It is indifferent to our present purpose that something more than exclusion from the Christian society is intended in this case; namely, deliverance unto Satan for the *destruction of the flesh*, — cf. the story of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11.

assembly as the rule required. Yet he does not seek to invalidate the rule, nor claim exception for himself as an apostle: he claims rather that he is conforming to its *essential* conditions, though he transgresses the formal precept. He recognizes that the Church is a *spiritual* assembly, the assembly of Christendom; therefore, though absent in body he may be counted present in spirit when his judgment against the sinner is read in the assembly, and the assembly has no other course but to assent to the condemnation — or repudiate his authority. This much being explained by way of preface, the interpretation of the passage is obvious: "For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already *as present* (ὡς παρὼν) judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of the Lord Jesus,<sup>12</sup> *ye being assembled and my spirit* with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This phrase perhaps reflects the solemn formula with which the teachers were wont to preface their discourse. Cf. Weizsäcker, *op. cit.* pp. 555, 582, commenting on 1 Cor. 12:3.

<sup>13</sup> After the development of the episcopal organization, the bishop as conductor of the Eucharist and teacher of the congregation exercised also the power of excommunication. The earliest witness is Ignatius: *Ephes.* 6:1, when the bishop is silent he is the more to be feared; *Philad.* 1:1, 2, the bishop's silence is more effective than the speech of the heretics, for the congregation is attuned to his commandments like the harp to its strings; — *Smyrn.* 7:2, the congregation has no dealings with the heretics either in public or private. The "silence" of the bishop signifies that he holds not (and so implicitly *forbids*) any intercourse with sinners: and the congregation follows his "commandments." This at least is Sohm's interpretation of these obscure passages, of which Lightfoot hardly knows what to make. Cf. Pseudo-Clement, *ad Jacob.* c. 18, "whom the bishop hates, him shall also the members of the congregation hate; with whom the bishop does not speak, with him shall the members of the congregation also refuse to speak; whoever remains a friend of him whom the bishop hates, and speaks to him with whom

St. Paul acted here in his capacity as teacher: he did what any other teacher might have done, though his character as apostle, and his personal relation to the Corinthian Church gave the greater assurance that his judgment would be accepted. Admonition, with all its consequences of discipline, belonged to the teaching office as such — to the prophet as well as to the apostle, to the teacher (in the narrower sense) as well as to the prophet. Discipline, being the consequence of admonition, could originate nowhere but in the teaching gift, whether manifested in official persons or not. Later this authority was exercised almost exclusively by the bishops, as the teachers of the Church by apostolic succession.

To understand the prophets' part in discipline we need to remember of course that prophecy was more than mere prediction of futurity; but it is still more important to note the *particularity* of the prophetic message. Prophecy depends always upon revelation, whether by vision or by voice; it represents, that is, conclusions that are not reached by the natural processes of reasoning, and it is this which most fundamentally distinguishes it from all other forms of teaching. The revelation might foretell a future event, or enunciate a

the bishop does not speak, he destroys the Church." Yet even in the third century other gifted teachers occasionally assumed the authority of excommunication. Cf. Eusebius *H. E.* VI. 43, 20, — the Roman bishop Cornelius fortifies his position by reference to the fact that already the *martyr* Moses had excluded Novatian and his company from communion. Cyprian, *ep.* 66, — the *martyr* Puppian admonishes Cyprian to penance as an unworthy bishop and breaks off communion with him: Cyprian at this is greatly excited, and threatens in turn to excommunicate the martyr — "*Dominum meum consulam, an tibi pacem dare et te ad communicationem ecclesiae suae admitti . . . permittat.*" Here as elsewhere the act of the teacher required the assent of the congregation to give it practical effect.



doctrine; but there is reason to suppose that Christian prophecy more commonly dealt with the practical affairs of the moment, supplying an authoritative decision in questions of difficulty or dispute, — designating to office, directing administration, pronouncing admonition or sentence of exclusion against offenders.<sup>14</sup> Old Testament prophecy, too, was largely of this character: Moses was the lawgiver of Israel in virtue of his prophetic gift; Samuel governed the people as Prophet; and even under the kings the prophets frequently interfered to direct the policy of the kingdom and the conduct of wars, employing particular admonitions and rebukes, as well as general exhortations to righteousness. The later Jewish prophecy was more commonly apocalyptic in character, and it is from that we get our narrower conception of the function of the prophetic gift. Of this sort is the Apocalypse, the most conspicuous example of prophecy in the New Testament, though even there we may observe that the first three chapters are occupied almost exclusively with practical admonition. Extensive and important as was the activity of the prophets in the first century, we have but scanty record of their messages; and this is in all likelihood due to the fact that the prophetic utterances were addressed so particularly *ad rem*, to the decision of the special case at issue, that their interest hardly outlived the occasion which prompted them. The influence of prophecy was expended upon the consolidation of custom, rather than upon the production of literary compositions.

The prophetic voice was therefore not only the most *direct* expression of God's will, but commonly the most particular. Hence the præminent authority

<sup>14</sup> For examples see the next section.

of the prophets as the lawgivers and administrators of the Ecclesia. There was no authority of higher instance than the prophet, for in the Ecclesia there was no law but God's will; no human will or authority might dominate, — not even human law regarded as an expression of the corporate will of the congregation.

"Teaching" (διδασκαλία) was likewise authoritative; but it was less direct, and commonly less particular than prophecy. Its business was the exposition and interpretation of the word of God as given in the Scriptures or in the teaching of the Lord Jesus. It furnished no new revelation, but made clear the significance and practical bearing of the revelation already given. It aimed chiefly at instruction, and hence it was commonly couched in general terms: it expounded in terms of rational argument the general principles which must regulate Christian life and Church order. But it, too, could make particular *application* of the Scriptural revelation in the form of admonition.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, *didaskalia* was *authoritative* teaching: whether it gave ordinances for the general conduct of congregational life, or exercised individual cure of souls and discipline, it did all in virtue of a divine gift, by divine authority, and in God's name.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 shows that the whole field of Christian teaching was open to the διδάσκαλος as the expounder of Scripture, for the Scriptures themselves completely furnished him for every good work of teaching — "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for discipline in righteousness." Cf. 1 Cor. 10:11, "these things were written for our admonition." For one of many instances of such application to practical Church issues see 1 Cor. 9:9, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Sohmn notes (p. 41, n. 8) that *didaskalia* properly denotes such teaching as is expressed in *general* terms. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:11, "these things command and teach;" 6:2, "these things teach and exhort." The authoritative character of *didaskalia* is shown further in 1 Tim. 5:7, "command these things" — with reference to the widows; 6:17, "command the rich." In 2 Tim. 2:15 (cf. v. 2) it is called a handling of the

To display the importance of the teaching gift for the order and administration of the Church I can do no better than to conclude this section by quoting Sohm's vigorous affirmations on the subject. They will not appear the less forcible for involving some repetition.<sup>17</sup>

We can estimate the importance of the gift of teaching when we recognize what a rôle was claimed for the word of God in the Ecclesia.

The word of God is the final and decisive source of Church order. Hence the conduct of the Christian assembly cannot be determined by the assembly itself in the exercise of self-government, but only by the way of *teaching*, which declares what is the will of God for the Ecclesia. But this is a matter which pertains to the gifted teacher, who in virtue of his charisma authoritatively proclaims the word of the Lord and authoritatively deduces its consequences. In this rôle appear, first of all, the apostles in the conduct of their congregations — for instance, the Apostle Paul. In questions about the conduct of congregational life St. Paul gives, now an express word of the Lord, and now his own "opinion" — in the confidence, however, that this accords with the mind of Christ.<sup>18</sup> Hence the accent of

word of truth. Cf. the remainder of Sohm's note for the authority that attached to the name "teacher" in the second century.

<sup>17</sup> Sohm, pp. 29-38. I translate the text pretty closely, but give the notes much abbreviated. In Sohm's work this passage follows immediately upon his discussion of Church organization which is quoted above at the end of § 10. I have altered the order here, and generally expanded the treatment, the better to meet certain objections that have been made to Sohm's theory and to prepare the mind of the reader for conclusions which cannot but appear startling at the first reading.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. above, p. 144, note D. Also 1 Cor. 7 : 10, "But unto the married I give charge (*παραγγελλω*), yea not I, but the Lord;" v. 12, "But to the rest say (*λέγω*) I, not the Lord;" v. 25, "Now concerning virgins I have no commandment (*ἐπιταγήν*) of the Lord, but I give my opinion (or

authority, the expectation of obedience, with which he presents his "doctrine."<sup>19</sup> At the same time there is here no question of the exercise of formal ecclesiastical authority (legislative authority — which belonged to the Apostle Paul as little as to any other Christian), but of doctrine, instruction, the proclamation of God's word. The whole apostolic "doctrine" of Church order was built up of such teaching, — whether didaskalia or prophecy.<sup>20</sup> The gifted teacher stood forth *in the name*

judgment — γνώμην), as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy;" v. 40, "But happier is she (the widow) if she abide as she is, in my opinion (γνώμην), and I think that I also have the Spirit of God;" 11 : 23, "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you;" 14 : 37, "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord"; 4 : 17, "who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ;" 1 Thess. 4 : 2, "ye know what charges (παράγγελίας) we gave you through the Lord Jesus." The apostle frames his precepts in the same fashion, whether he is prescribing regulations for the conduct of private life, or for the conduct of the assembly — hence all of the passages quoted are here in point — in both cases it is a question of the life of the Ecclesia, the body of Christ.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor. 11 : 17, "in giving you this charge" (παράγγελλον); v. 34, "the rest will I ordain (διατάξομαι) when I come;" "so I ordain (διατάσσομαι) in all the Churches;" 7 : 6, "this I say by way of permission, not of commandment;" 2 Cor. 8 : 8, "I speak not by way of commandment," — It is implied that the apostle *can* speak by way of commandment.

<sup>20</sup> The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians gives a didaskalia upon Church order (the rights of the bishops) : the contents of the epistle reveal the "will of God," it is "spoken by Christ through us" (ἐπ' αὐτοῦ δι' ἡμῶν) and therefore requires obedience (1 Clem. 59 : 1 ; cf. 56 : 1, "they must yield not to us, but to the will of God"). The *Teaching of the Apostles* and the later pseudo-apostolic Church ordinances bear the same character. A prophecy upon Church order is contained in the Shepherd of Hermas, inasmuch as it is there revealed, that for a certain time the possibility of a second penance is offered by God to all sinners. The epistles of Ignatius give another example of such a prophecy. Ignatius declared prophetically to the congregation that only in communion with their bishop, presbytery, and deacons could they constitute a valid assembly (Ecclesia), — *Philad.* 7, ἐκράυγασα . . . μεγάλη φωνῇ, θεοῦ φωνῇ · Τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ προσέχετε καὶ τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ διακόνοις. . . . Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα



of God to instruct Christendom concerning the order and organization of the Ecclesia.

In regard even to the individual problems of congregational life it is only the word of God that can supply the desired solution (cf. p. 143).

Take the case, for instance, of election to some office in the service of Christendom. Since the very thought of a legal, formally incorporated organization was foreign to the early Church, there could be no vote by the congregational meeting in our sense, nor, indeed, any election of a legal sort, but only an election by God. God chooses the fit person by means of a special revelation, using as his instrument the prophecy of a gifted teacher. He that is called through prophecy is called by the Holy Ghost, who spake by the prophet.<sup>21</sup>

ἐκήφυσεν λέγων τάδε · Χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου μηδὲν ποιεῖτε. Cyprian had a revelation in which he heard a voice declare that Christ would punish disobedience to the rightly constituted bishop, — Cypr. *ep.* 66: 10, inter cetera quae ostendere et revelare dignatus est (deus) et hoc addidit: Qui Cristo non credit sacerdotem facienti, postea credere incipiet sacerdotem vindicanti. — Here it may be noted that the synods, which since the fourth century controlled the development of Church order, formulated their decisions by suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. below the beginning of § 18. Acts 20: 28, where it is said of the elders (πρεσβύτεροι) of the Church at Ephesus that the Holy Spirit had made them bishops (ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους). 1 Clem. ad Cor. 42: 4, the Apostles appointed bishops and deacons, "testing (them) by the Spirit" (δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι), i. e. discerning by the aid of the Holy Ghost those that were fit for the office. Clemens Alex., τίς δὲ σωζόμενος πλούσιος, c. 42, the Apostle John appointed Church officers from among the number of those whom "the Spirit indicated" (τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ πνεύματος σημειομένων). The assumption in all three passages evidently is that bishops and deacons (as well as apostles and evangelists — cf. § 18) are chosen by the Holy Ghost, i. e. through the medium of the prophecy of a teacher (in this case an apostle); and that this is the ordinary mode of election, the mode which is understood as a matter of course. Especially clear is the passage quoted from the Acts, where it is simply taken for granted that the elders there addressed had been ap-

Or take the case of absolution. The declaration of absolution or remission of sins can only be made in God's name and in his stead. The general terms of absolution are a part of God's revelation, and any *particular* absolution implies the handling of the word of God, a prophetic declaration of God's gracious will with respect to this sinner. Absolution therefore is accomplished through the act of a *teacher*, to whom it is given to minister the word of God as God's representative.<sup>22</sup>

pointed bishops by "the Holy Ghost." Acts 14: 23 (Paul and Barnabas) "having appointed for them elders in every city, praying with fasting." On this see Harnack, *Proleg. to Didache*, p. 148, note: "*prayer and fasting* (the petition for the guidance of the Holy Ghost) precedes the appointment." — For the significance of the fact that an elective act on the part of the assembled congregation accompanies the election by God (the "Holy Ghost"), cf. § 18.

<sup>22</sup> According to Tertullian, *de pudic.* c. 21, the authority to forgive deadly sins belongs only *apostolo aut prophetæ* (such being the Montanistic doctrine), while the Catholic Church ascribed this authority to the bishop as well. The fundamental thought common to both parties is this, that the authority to remit sins belongs to the gifted teacher — consequently, the Catholics would say, to the bishop as successor of the apostles. According to the common Christian view, as well as in the opinion of the Montanists, the martyrs were placed in this respect on a par with the prophets. Cf. Eusebius, *H. E.* V. 2, 5 (letter of the Churches of Lyon and Vienne, about A. D. 177): the martyrs *ἔλυνον μὲν ἅπαντες, ἐδέσμευον δὲ οὐδένα*, i. e. they loosed all those *lapsi* from their sins who had atoned for their denial by subsequent firm confession. See Sohm's note to p. 32 for a long list of passages in which the power of forgiving and retaining sins is claimed by and conceded to the martyrs; in which the view is expressed that "Christ is in the martyr," "suffers" in him, "testifies" in him; in which to the martyr is ascribed the spiritual gifts of the apostles and prophets. — The function of the teaching office is not merely petition to God for the forgiveness of sin, but the *announcement* that God has forgiven the sin. Therefore, just as it is said of the martyrs that they "loose" (*ἔλυνον*), "forgive," "give peace;" so Tertullian says alike of the martyrs, the prophets, and the Roman bishop, that they exercise the potestas delictorum remittendorum, delicta donare, donare quæ deo reservanda sunt (*de pudic.* c. 1), — that is, in God's stead they directly *forgive*. The forgiveness of sins is a function of the ministry of the word and hence of the gifted teachers, — the apostles, prophets, martyrs, bishops. So runs the edict of the Roman bishop (*de*

It has been shown above (pp. 225 sq.) that Church discipline also was essentially a part of the ministry of the word, and was exercised in the first instance solely by the teacher, through *admonition*.

It results therefore that in the matter of ecclesiastical order, of a call to service in the Ecclesia (appointment to office), of absolution and reception into the fellowship of the Ecclesia, of discipline or exclusion from the Ecclesia, only the *gifted teacher* can decide, because it is only the *word of God*, not any congregational enactment as such, that is able to resolve such questions.

The gift of teaching is the *gift of regiment*, a gift which empowers its possessor to conduct the government of *Christendom* in the name of *God*.

The most complete expression of this fact is contained in the well known word of the Lord to the Apostle Peter, Matt. 16 : 18, 19, —

“And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys

*pudic. c. 1*) : ego et moecchiae et fornicationis delicta poenitentia functis dimitto, — cf. Hippolytus, *Philosoph.* ix. 12, πᾶσιν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἀφίεσθαι ἁμαρτίας. The forgiveness of sins is a function of the ministry of the word and hence belongs to the gifted teachers, — the apostles, prophets, martyrs, bishops. The same teaching office decided for the Church the limits within which the forgiveness of sins might be accorded. So, for instance, at Rome the διδάσκαλοι taught that no second absolution might be granted for post-baptismal sins (Hermas, *Mand.* IV. 3, 1), while the prophet Hermas taught that for a certain time a second penance was still admissible in virtue of a special revelation. The “edict” of the Roman bishop Callistus, cited above, proclaimed the possibility of the remission of fleshly sins. That the lapsed also might receive absolution, was settled by the bishops on the ground of “visions and revelations” (Cypr. *ep.* 57 : 2). — For the significance of the fact that the assent of the assembly was required to give effect in the congregation to the absolution granted by the teacher, cf. § 17. The *prayer* for absolution was in place in the congregational assembly, and from it was derived the so-called deprecatory formula of absolution.

of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

The power of the keys is the power to loose and to bind,—that is, in general, the power to allow and to forbid, and that, too, in the *name of God*. It is the power of teaching, in the sense above expounded, the power which ruled the whole life of the Church. It is the power or authority to speak in God's name and in his stead ; to handle God's word, and hence to exercise government in the Church. It is therefore also the power to forgive sins or to retain them in the name of God, since the forgiveness of sin represents merely a particular instance of the ministry of the word. Hence it is with justice that the passage in John 20 : 22, 23 has in all times been taken to refer to the power of the keys :

"Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them ; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

That word of the Lord to the Apostle Peter was the answer to Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In so far as Peter expressed the faith of the other disciples, the answer included them also : the same power is given to all of the Twelve in John 20 : 23, and it is promised still more generally in Matt. 18 : 18.<sup>23</sup> The gift of teaching rests upon the possession of the Holy Spirit. The sign by which the presence of the Holy Spirit may be recognized is the confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.<sup>24</sup> To every one that is fur-

<sup>23</sup> Cf. § 8, pp. 117 sq.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 12 : 3, "No one can say, Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" also 1 John 4 : 2, 3.



nished by the Holy Spirit with such a faith and doctrine is given the power of the keys in the House of God (the Ecclesia), that is, the power of regiment in God's name and through God's word.

## § 16, THE TEACHING OFFICE<sup>1</sup>

The possessors of this gift of teaching are first of all the apostles, prophets and teachers, who therefore claim the first rank in Christendom.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this section with its notes is translated pretty closely from Sohm, § 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 12 : 28, "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then —" Harnack makes a valuable contribution to the study of these offices in his *Prolegomena* to the *Didache*, pp. 93 sq. See especially note 8 on p. 94 where the significance of the term ἡγούμενοι is explained. The word first occurs in Heb. 13 : 7, *Μνημονεύετε τῶν ἡγουμένων ὑμῶν, οἵτινες ἐλάλησαν ὑμῖν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ*. Here the ἡγούμενοι are expressly characterized as "those that spake unto you the word of God." Cf. *Didache*, iv. 1, *Τέκνον μου, τοῦ λαλοῦντός σοι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μνησθήσῃ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας, τιμήσεις δὲ αὐτὸν ὡς Κύριον*. The whole of the *Didache* (particularly cap. xv. on bishops and deacons) shows that there was but one class of persons held in singular honor (οἱ *τετιμημένοι*, xv. 2) in the congregation, namely, such as proclaimed the word of God in their capacity as *ministri evangelii*. The Epistle to the Hebrews likewise distinguishes but two classes in the congregation: the ἡγούμενοι, who "watch in behalf of your souls" (13 : 17); and the ἅγιοι (v. 24). In Acts 15 : 22, 32 the "prophets" Judas and Silas are spoken of as *ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς*. These passages throw light upon the interpretation of 1 *Clem. ad Cor.* 1 : 3; 21 : 6, where ἡγούμενοι (also *προηγούμενοι*) are distinguished from the "elders" and the duty of obedience towards the former is urged, while the latter can claim only a *τιμὴ καθήκουσα*. Cf. *Hermas*, *Vis.* II. 2 : 6; III. 9 : 7. The gift of teaching implied leadership in the congregation, and in the whole of early Christian literature the word ἡγούμενοι is used only of those who were the spiritual instructors of the Church, the prophets and teachers by profession. It had therefore the same scope and significance as *τετιμημένοι* (*Didache*, xv. 2). But just as the bishops and deacons (and subsequently the presbyters) came to be included under the designation *τετιμημένοι*, inasmuch as "they too perform the service of the prophets and teachers;" so were they included also under the ἡγούμενοι. As the prophets and teachers by profession vanished, the latter — especially the bishops — alone

The apostles are those whom Christ himself has chosen and sent as missionaries for the dissemination of the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> They possess all the spiritual gifts in

were left to represent the *ἡγούμενοι*. Tertullian already uses the expressions *duces*, *auctores*, as equivalent to *praepositi* and *clerus* (*de fuga*, c. 11).

<sup>3</sup> St. Paul characterized as apostles not only "the Twelve," but all who had *seen* the Lord and had received from him personal permission and authority to proclaim the Gospel. From this point of view he himself is an apostle of Christ on an equal footing with "the Twelve": 1 Cor. 9:1, "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord?" According to 15:5-8 the Lord appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve, then to "all the apostles," and finally to Paul himself. The Lord's appearance to "above five hundred brethren" shows that not all who *saw* were *called* to the apostolic mission. St. Paul is the last whom Christ called to the apostleship. With this agrees Rom. 16:7, where it is said of Andronicus and Junius that they "are of note among the apostles," and also that they "have been in Christ before me." From this point of view James, the brother of the Lord, was reckoned among the "apostles," Barnabas also (Gal. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9:5, 6; Acts 14:4, 14) and probably Silvanus (1 Thess. 1:1; cf. 2:6), but not Timothy (2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1; Philip. 1:1). See Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, pp. 95 sqq. From this point of view, moreover, the appearance of *ψευδαπόστολοι* (2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2) is comprehensible: such men had in truth never seen Christ nor received any commission from him.—The above represents the view of Lightfoot in his dissertation on *The Name and Office of an Apostle*, *op. cit.* pp. 97, 98. Lightfoot justly remarks (p. 98) that St. Paul is replying to the argument of his judaizing opponents who would deny his apostleship, when he asks the rhetorical question (1 Cor. 9:1), "Have I not seen our Lord Jesus?"; and consequently that, to have *seen* the Lord, must have been reckoned by both parties, Jewish and Gentile Christians alike, an essential condition of the apostolate, the great function of which was the proclamation of the Lord's resurrection as personal witnesses (Luke 24:4, 8; Acts 1:8). By this the apostles are distinguished from the evangelists, who likewise were wandering missionaries, and were equipped with an apostolic charisma, but had no direct commission from the Lord. Cf. Harnack's note to *Didache*, xi. 6. Ephes. 4:11, "apostles . . . prophets . . . evangelists." Acts. 21:8; Euseb. *H. E.* II. 3:1; III. 37:2-4; and V. 10:2, which treats of the evangelists of a later time, down to the end of the second century. The recipients of the Pastoral Epistles appear to be evangelists,—2 Tim. 4:5, "doing the work of an evangelist." In so far as the evangelist is called to his work by the charisma with which he is equipped (2 Tim. 2:6, "the gift of God which is in thee," cf. 1 Tim. 4:14) he is to be accounted as one called of God (1 Tim. 6:11, *σὺ δὲ, ὁ*

their fulness, among them the gift of prophecy and teaching in all its manifestations.<sup>4</sup> The apostolic gift represents the highest, the most complete gift of teaching.<sup>5</sup> The "evangelists," the wandering missionaries of the post-apostolic age, were likewise included under the honorary name of "apostle," since they were called by their apostolic charisma to a like activity.<sup>6</sup> All of the apostles (evangelists included) were empowered to administer the affairs of the Church in virtue of their teaching gift. Just as the apostles in the early Church at Jerusalem had the whole conduct of the congregation in their charge,<sup>7</sup> so the Pastoral Epistles represent the evangelists Timothy and Titus in a position of full authority over the congregation, — they are responsible for appointment to office,<sup>8</sup> they exercise dis-

ἄνθρωπε τοῦ θεοῦ; 4: 6, διάκονος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ; 2 Tim. 2: 24, δοῦλον δὲ Κυρίου; 1 Thess. 3: 2, Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ), and hence the evangelists also were called "apostles" in the second century, — so especially in *Didache*, xi. 3-6.

<sup>4</sup> That the Apostle Paul exercised all these gifts is showed by his epistles, — cf. particularly 1 Cor. 14: 6.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *de exhort. cast.* c. 4, *Proprie enim apostoli spiritum sanctum habent, [ut] qui plene habent, in operibus prophetiae et efficacia virtutum documentisque linguarum, non ex parte, quod ceteri.* The reputation of having the "apostolic gift" is therefore the highest boast that can be made in behalf of any one. Cf. in note 23 below, the passages which speak of the apostolic teaching gift of Polycarp, and the "apostolic charisma" of the martyrs.

<sup>6</sup> See note 3.

<sup>7</sup> The apostles in Jerusalem were charged not only with the teaching in the assembly, but with the prayers (Acts 6:4, "But we will devote ourselves to the prayer and the ministry of the word;" cf. v. 6, where the apostles utter the ordination prayer), and until the election of the "seven" they alone had the administering of the offerings, that is, the Church property (Acts 4: 35, 37; 5:2; 6:1 sq.) The conduct of the prayers and the administration of the gifts implies likewise the administration of the Eucharist.

<sup>8</sup> They appoint bishops and deacons, — Tit. 1: 5, and 1 Tim. 3: 1 sq., 8 sq. The regulations about the character to be required in bishops and deacons imply that Timothy was in a position to appoint them.

cipline,<sup>9</sup> administer Church property,<sup>10</sup> give general ordinances,<sup>11</sup> and in all these matters the assent of the congregation is counted upon as in the case of an apostle.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. especially 1 Tim. 5:20, "Them that sin reprove in the sight of all."

<sup>10</sup> 1 Tim. 5:17, the "elders that preside well" are to be accorded "double honor," *i. e.* they are to receive a double portion of the offerings (cf. below § 20). The counsel given in 1 Tim. 5:11 to "refuse the younger widows" implies not only the authority to appoint widows, but authority also over the Church property, since the official widows were to be supported out of the offerings (v. 16).

<sup>11</sup> So, for instance, in the matter of marriage and food, 1 Tim. 4:3-6.

<sup>12</sup> All this in virtue of the charisma which they possess:—1 Tim. 4:14, "Neglect not the charisma that is in thee;" 2 Tim. 1:6, "I put thee in remembrance to kindle the charisma of God that is in thee." The whole activity of the evangelist consists in "handling aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). The view is still commonly entertained that Timothy and Titus, to whom the Pastoral Epistles are addressed, held their positions of authority only in virtue of apostolic authorization, as apostolic delegates. This view is not consistent with the contents of the epistles. It is true that the evangelist receives counsels and injunctions from the apostle (for instance, Tit. 1:5, "as I gave thee charge"), and the apostle proposes to come and relieve the evangelist of his duty. But nowhere is there a hint that the evangelist acts in the apostle's name and exercises authority as his representative. What empowers the evangelist for his mission is not any formal authorization, but the possession of a charisma; and he acts not as the apostle's helper, but as "man of God" and "servant of Christ." In virtue of the gift which God has given him he acts in the name of *God*, not of the apostle. The position of Timothy and Titus according to the Pastoral Epistles is precisely the same as in the unquestionably genuine letters of St. Paul:—cf. 1 Thess. 3:2, "we sent Timothy . . . a fellow worker with God . . . to establish you and comfort you;" 1 Cor. 16:10, 11, "if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do;" 2 Cor. 7:15, Titus "remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him." Timothy and Titus perform the same work as the apostle, the work of the Lord, and as workers with God (in the work of evangelization) they claim and expect the obedience of the congregations. The critical questions about the Pastoral Epistles need not therefore be raised here. It only needs to be emphasized that the position ascribed to Timothy and Titus corresponds thoroughly with the view-point of the Apostolic Age. Other reasons which forbid us to refer the Pastoral Epistles to the second century will appear below.



It was not until the second century that the rule was made prohibiting the travelling "apostle" from remaining longer than two days in any community.<sup>13</sup> By this the evangelists were effectually excluded from participation in congregational government. The age of mistrust had already arrived, heralding the approach of Catholicism, which was to restrict the Spirit by law to precise bounds which it might not overstep.

The apostles were also prophets, inasmuch as they possessed the gift of prophecy:<sup>14</sup> but the "prophets" in the narrower sense were those prophetically gifted men, who, lacking the commission to the apostolate and the call to the missionary activity of an evangelist, were settled in already established congregations.<sup>15</sup> To the prophet, in virtue of his revelations, belonged the highest authority in the assembly or congregation—an authority which was all the more marked as the number of prophets began to diminish. The congregation that boasted a prophet in its midst looked naturally to him as the decisive authority in matters of Church order, appointment to office, absolution, and the conduct of the Eucharist—including the offering of the prayer and the disposition of the gifts. The prophet was also the highest authority in questions

<sup>13</sup> The *Didache*, xi. 5 requires that visiting "apostles" shall remain with the congregation two days at the longest—otherwise he is a "false prophet." The Pastoral Epistles know of no such limitation, and in this they reflect the earlier situation. Timothy is not to remain permanently in Ephesus, but yet he is there to fill the office of teacher until St. Paul come (1 Tim. 4:13). Cf. Rom. 16:7, where St. Paul, in sending greeting to the "apostles" Andronicus and Junius, implies clearly that they were not at this place of address for a mere passing visit.

<sup>14</sup> In the *Didache* (xi. 5, 6) the false apostle is therefore called a "false prophet."

<sup>15</sup> The *Didache* considers the prophets (xi. 7 sq.) immediately after the "apostles," the wandering missionaries. In xiii. 1 the prophet is supposed to "settle" in this or that congregation.

of administration: he was at once preacher, lawgiver, and presiding officer of the congregation.<sup>16</sup>

Both apostles and prophets are at the same time teachers, and can therefore be included under the διδάσκαλοι:<sup>17</sup> but "teachers" in the more specific sense are the preachers permanently established in the congregation who lack the special gift of prophecy. For this reason the teachers are more numerous than the prophets, and inferior to them in grade and authority. But the teacher, too, enjoys high estimation and authority as one of the natural leaders of the congregation.<sup>18</sup> His teaching is authoritative doctrine,

<sup>16</sup> Lucian, *Peregrinus*, c. 11: — Peregrinus Proteus (in the fourth decade of the second century) settles as prophet in a community, προφήτης καὶ θεασάρχης καὶ συναγωγεὺς καὶ πάντα μόνος αὐτὸς ὢν.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Rev. 2: 20, "Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess and teacheth," etc. *Didache*, xi. 10, "every prophet, though he teacheth the truth, if he does not do what he teacheth, is a false prophet." The prophet Montanus is also called διδάσκαλος by the anti-Montanist Apollonius (about A. D. 200) in Euseb. *H. E.* V. 18: 2, ὁ πρόσφατος διδάσκαλος, τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία. Cf. also *Martyrium Polycarpi* (Euseb. *H. E.* IV. 15: 39), διδάσκαλος ἀποστολικὸς καὶ προφητικὸς.

<sup>18</sup> In 1 Cor. 12: 28 the "teachers" occupy the "third" place — immediately after the prophets. Likewise in Rom. 12: 7 "teaching" comes in the third place — after prophecy and ministry. Ephes. 4: 11 places the teacher at the end of the list — after apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors — but still among those whom Christ has called to "the building up of his Church," and so among the leaders of Christendom. See Harnack, *Proleg.* p. 111, for an elenchus of passages in which apostles, prophets, and teachers are mentioned in various orders of sequence. — The fame of the Alexandrian διδάσκαλοι — Pantaenus, Clement, Heracles, Origen — is well known. Also the country διδάσκαλοι of Egypt were held in such high estimation that the Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria felt himself obliged to intervene personally to condemn their false doctrine (Euseb. *H. E.* VII. 24: 6). At the beginning of the fourth century the ambition of the notorious Arius was to acquire the reputation of a "teacher," the better to maintain himself against the Bishop of Alexandria, — cf. the account given by the Anomomous of the Meletanian schism (Routh, *Reliquiae*, V. p. 94): Erat autem in civitate (Alexandria) quidam Isidorus nomine, moribus turbulentus, doctoris habens desiderium, et Arius quidam, habitum portans pietatis, et ipse doctoris desiderium habens,

advice, command. He too exercises a normative influence upon the order and administration of the congregation.<sup>19</sup> To him belongs the important office of instructing the catechumens.<sup>20</sup> The teacher, however, must take a subordinate place, if a prophet be in the congregation.<sup>21</sup> This explains the fact that a class of "teachers" continued to exist, at least in some parts of the Church, long after the development of the monarchical episcopate: the teacher could subordinate himself to the bishop as formerly to the prophet, while the prophet was destined to disappear before an officer who could brook no superior.<sup>22</sup>

The three sorts of teachers that have just been considered are very closely related: in all three cases it is an "apostolic gift" which is possessed and an apostolic function of teaching which is exercised.<sup>23</sup> For this

. . . invidentes scilicet pontificatum b. Petri (of the Bishop of Alexandria). That the account (originally written in Greek) is contemporary is showed by the turn "Arius *quidam*."

<sup>19</sup> Cf. pp. 237 sq.

<sup>20</sup> The catechetical school of Alexandria was conducted by διδάσκαλοι. In this office, it is true, the presbyters, "presbyteri doctores," commonly take the place of the διδάσκαλοι, Cyprian, *epist.* 29, cum *presbyteris doctoribus* lectores diligenter probaremus, Optatum inter lectores *doctorum audientium* constituimus: — cf. O. Ritschl, *Cyprian* (1885), pp. 171 sq., 232 sq.; also Sohm, note 31 on p. 47.

<sup>21</sup> Pseudo-Clement, *de virginitate* (about 200 A. D.) i. 11, the teacher (doctor) is admonished to *serve* with his charisma the prophets — inservi fratribus pneumaticis, prophetis. Cf. Harnack, *Proleg.* p. 133. Hence it is that the teachers receive only a passing mention in the *Didache* (xiii. 2; xv. 1, 2): one of the tendencies of that work (and perhaps of that age in general) was to emphasize the subordination of the teacher to the prophet.

<sup>22</sup> Especially in Egypt, cf. above, note 18; also Sohm, note 33 on p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> In the Martyrium Polycarpi (Euseb. *H. E.* IV. 15: 39) the martyr is called a διδάσκαλος ἀποστόλικος καὶ προφητικός. He is called an "apostolic" teacher because he is a "prophetic" teacher, "for every word of his mouth has been fulfilled." Polycarp himself calls Irenaeus a μακάριος καὶ ἀποστόλικος πρεσβύτερος, after having praised him as a

reason the boundaries are mutable: the apostles are at the same time prophets and teachers, and by settlement in a congregation they may become teachers in the narrower sense, as the prophets on their part may transform themselves into apostles (in the latter sense) by adopting the wandering life of the missionary: <sup>24</sup> the prophets moreover are included in the more general class of teachers, and the teacher in turn is not necessarily excluded from prophesying, though his gift may not be constant enough to distinguish him as a prophet.<sup>25</sup>

διδάσκαλος (Euseb. *ib.* V. 20:6, 7). The letter of the churches of Lyon and Vienne praises the Martyr and physician Alexander διὰ τὴν πρὸς Θεὸν ἀγάπην καὶ παρῴρσιαν τοῦ λόγου ἣν γὰρ οὐκ ἀμοῖρος ἀποστολικοῦ χαρίσματος (Euseb. *ib.* V. 1:49). Euseb. *de mart. Palaest.* I. 11:1, twelve men, προφητικοῦ τινος ἢ καὶ ἀποστολικοῦ χαρίσματος καὶ ἀριθμοῦ κατηξιωμένοι. The expressions, not to command as a "teacher," nor as an "apostle," recur in Ignatius as of like significance (*Trall.* 3:3; *Rom.* 4:3); with Ignat. *Ephes.* 3:1; cf. Barnabas 1:8, οὐχ ὡς διδάσκαλος ἀλλ' ὡς εἰς ἐξ ὑμῶν. The extraordinary teaching gift is an *apostolic* gift. It was in the apostles that the fulness of the teaching gift was first manifested: in the prophets and teachers the same gift and the same Spirit is now manifested, — that is the thought which underlies these expressions.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 13:1 sq.; 14:14, from among the "prophets and teachers" at Antioch two men — Paul and Barnabas — are separated by the voice of the Holy Ghost to be "apostles." On the other hand, Pantaenus was first "evangelist" (apostle) and subsequently settled in Alexandria as διδάσκαλος, Euseb. *H. E.* V. 10:2, 4. The story of Peregrinus Proteus illustrates this change of functions. Harnack makes a distinction between the wandering prophet and the apostle, as they appear in the *Didache* (*Proleg.* pp. 114, 119, 126): but they both possessed the same charisma — the apostle had the charisma of the prophet and teacher — and the prophet by adopting the wandering life became an "apostle," as that word is used in the *Didache*, — so Zahn, *Forschungen*, III. p. 300; and Löning, *Gemeindeverfassung*, pp. 37, 39.

<sup>25</sup> Here, as in a few other places, I have altered Sohm's phrase, because I am not in complete agreement with him about the distinctive characteristic of the prophet. The *distinguishing* mark of the official prophet he takes to be the power of speaking "in the Spirit," *i. e.* in *ecstasy* (p. 45), whereas he represents *prophecy* as equivalent to spontaneous and enthusiastic utterance (p. 39, "Ein jedes begeisterte Zeugnis ist eine Prophetie"). On the contrary, I take prophecy to be more strictly the outcome of revelation, — see above, p. 230.



The principal distinction which these three sorts of teachers have in common lies in the fact that they, *and they alone*, follow the profession of preaching the Gospel as their *sole vocation*. They, and they alone, are morally justified in not working, but allowing themselves to be supported by the congregation: the vocation of preaching is properly their only vocation, and hence they have a right to live from the gifts of the Church.<sup>26</sup> Connected with this is the fact that they were likened to the priesthood of the Old Covenant: in 1 Cor. 9:13, 14 the Hebrew precedent is cited in their favor, — “Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live by the Gospel.” The preaching of the Gospel is the New Testament altar-service, the teachers constitute the New Testament priesthood, they are the messengers<sup>27</sup> and representatives of God. In this sense

<sup>26</sup> The general principle is expressed in 1 Cor. 9:14, “the Lord ordained that they which proclaim the Gospel should live by the Gospel” (cf. Matt. 10:10; 1 Cor. 9:6–11). Gal. 6:6, “Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.” Hence it is that the apostles have “a right not to work” (1 Cor. 9:6). 1 Thess. 2:6, *δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι*. Cf. 2 Cor. 11:7–9, in order not to be burdensome to the Corinthians, but to maintain his boast of preaching to them the Gospel “for naught,” St. Paul “robbed other churches, taking wages from them.” The same claim was made on behalf of the evangelist (2 Tim. 2:6), of the prophet (*Didache*, xiii. 1, “Every true prophet is worthy of his food”), and of the teacher (*Didache*, xiii. 2, “likewise every true teacher, he too is, like the laborer, worthy of his food”). Agreeably to this St. Paul implies that there were others beside himself in the Corinthian Church (*i. e.* apostles, prophets, or teachers) who “partake of this right” over them.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gal. 4:14, *ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με*, and perhaps Rev. 2:3, etc. — the *ἄγγελοι* of the Churches of Asia Minor.

St. Paul speaks of his activity as a *priestly* ministry,<sup>28</sup> and at the beginning of the second century the *Didache* calls the prophets the "high priests" of the Church, thus establishing their right to enjoy the first fruits like the priests of Israel.<sup>29</sup>

In the call to administer the word of God, to address the Church in God's name, lies the priesthood of the New Covenant; and it is in this character (as vicars of Christ or God) that the teacher exercises the power of the keys—the cure of souls and regiment. The calling of the teachers is a priestly and pastoral vocation; that is, a vocation to the spiritual government of Christendom.

## § 17, THE TEACHERS AND THE ASSEMBLY

It is evident from the foregoing that we may properly enough speak of a teaching *office*, or rather of various *offices*, represented by apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers. All of these teachers enjoyed in some sort an official status: by the nature of their gifts or the character of their activity they were distinguished more or less definitely<sup>1</sup> from one another as well as from the rest of the disciples; they spoke with an authority which was recognized by the Church; and they claimed the right to receive their support from the congregation. Moreover, the authority which in virtue of their gifts they might claim in one congre-

<sup>28</sup> Rom. 15:16, εἰς τὸ εἶναι με λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἱεουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ.

<sup>29</sup> *Didache*, xiii. 3, "All the first fruits shalt thou give to the prophets, for they are your high priests." Cf. Hippolytus, *Philosoph.*, *inst.*, where the χάρις ἀρχιερατείας καὶ διδασκαλίας is ascribed to the bishops as successors of the apostles.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. § 12, pp. 189 sqq.

gation, they might claim in all ; that is to say, they were officers not of this or that congregation, but of the Church at large, of Christendom, even though their ministry were actually confined to one community.

At the same time, it is equally evident that their status was not a *legal* one. The names which distinguished them, the place of honor which they enjoyed in the assembly and upon the lists of the beneficiaries of the Church,<sup>2</sup> the acts of election and induction, in short, all the formal elements which contributed to define their official character, cannot be interpreted as implying an imputation of *legal* authority, but only as so many ways of expressing public *recognition* of the teacher's charisma. The official recognition was doubtless a factor of great moment for the authority of the teacher in relation to the assembly. The presumption was naturally on the side of any one who claimed a spiritual gift to instruct the assembly, and an official status (formal recognition as a teacher) vastly enhanced the preponderance in his favor. But the assent and obedience which was rendered to the teacher was due not to his office, but to his gift. The assembly was morally bound to follow the instruction of its teachers only in so far as it was recognized as the commandment of God : on the other hand it was theoretically free to test the individual utterances of its officers, and if their gift was proved unreal or their doctrine unsound, all authority fell at once to the ground. Office conferred no formal right upon the teacher, and implied no formal subjection on the part of the assembly.<sup>3</sup> The teacher might exact no canonical obedience, but only the free obedience of love. All office whatsoever in the Church signifies,

<sup>2</sup> See § 20.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. § 13, pp. 200 sq.

not lordship or mastery, but service (διακονία), — according to the word of the Lord (Matt. 20:26, 27), “Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant.”<sup>4</sup>

With regard to this class of officers (apostles, evangelists, prophets, and teachers) the case is particularly clear, because in this case the situation in the Apostolic Age is not obscured by subsequent developments. These officers (with the possible exception of the διδάσκαλος) *never acquired* a legal status in the Church, for they did not survive the Catholic legalization of Christendom.<sup>5</sup>

It is likewise true that the assembly on its part exercised no legal authority and performed no legal function in selecting and inducting its officers. The

<sup>4</sup> The phrase “ministerial authority” is one which recurs frequently in Moberly’s *Ministerial Priesthood*. It is a good example of the legerdemain by which the author attempts to disguise the essential contrariety of two opposed theories of Church government. This phrase — unless it is to be regarded as a paradox — is palpably absurd, and the absurdity becomes at once apparent when the thought is expressed in simple English. The Latin adjective lends itself to ambiguity, but “the authority of a *servant*” is clearly a contradiction in terms. The teacher (priest) is justly accounted a servant of the Church, but it is impossible that *in that character* he can claim any authority over the Church. His *authority* lies in the fact that he is also a servant of God and speaks as God’s representative. The primitive (and early Catholic) theory of Church government which ascribes to the teacher a divine authority as God’s representative, cannot be reconciled by a phrase (“ministerial priesthood” is another example) with the modern theory which explains the authority of the Christian minister by the notion of legal delegation from the Church.

<sup>5</sup> These being the first offices to be developed in the Church, it is natural to suppose that they must have determined the notion of Christian office in general: that is, the offices of bishop and deacon must have been interpreted in accordance with this standard and subsumed under the general conception of charismatic office. The prevalent theory, however, draws a sharp line between the higher teaching offices (apostles, prophets, etc.), which it treats as the only charismatic offices, and the “congregational offices” of bishop and deacon (and presbyter). The prevalent



assembly did not act in virtue of any supposed right of self-government, as though it were electing ministers of its own and empowering them to exercise representatively the corporate authority of the congregation. The act of the assembly was merely an act of *recognition*; it implied no authority whatsoever on the part of the Church, but rather consent and *subjection* to the representatives of divine authority.

The popular *recognition* of a gifted teacher, by whatsoever formalities it was expressed, cannot be supposed to have had the effect of materially equipping such a person for his vocation, or even of legally empowering him to exercise his gift. For the assembly as such can neither bestow a charisma nor call to a vocation: it can act only as a witness to the fact that such a person is truly called and endowed *by God* for the work of a teacher. It is equally impossible to suppose that the assent of the assembly to the ministry of the word in any particular case—whether it be the case of a doctrine, of a precept, or of an admonition—has the power, as it were, to make such a word the word of God. For the assembly as such has no charisma, only the individual is charismatically endowed, and a resolution of the assembly has merely the significance of a *testimony*. The power to act—whether in the matter of legislation, election, absolution, or excommunication—is not derived from any resolution of the assembly (congregation), but from the charisma of the teacher, by means of which the word and will of

theory accords in general with what has been said above as touching the former class of offices, particularly in recognizing that they were Church offices in the fullest sense and as such could have no legal character; but it regards the latter as essentially and originally legal institutions, representing an authority delegated by the congregation, and hence only congregational offices, not Church offices.

God is evinced in the Church. The freedom of the Christian assembly is commonly regarded as an expression of the ideal of popular sovereignty and is supposed to imply a democratic organization. This conception is radically at fault, for the assembly claimed no rights of self-government, rather it recognized its subjection in all things to the will and rule of God (or Christ).

Did the apostle or prophet act in the name of the Church or in virtue of an authority which he had received from some congregation? No, clearly not. Whatever he did, he did in God's name, in virtue of an authority which was God-given, resident in his personal charisma. The government of Christendom rests not upon any authority conferred upon the congregation, but solely upon the authority which inheres in the personal charisma of the teacher. The leadership of the Ecclesia comes from *above*, through the medium of the *individual* who is personally endowed by God. The government of Christendom is from first to last authoritative, *monarchical*, in its nature, and the immense importance of the teaching office is due to the fact that it does not represent a legal, disciplinary authority exercised in the name of the Church as a self-governing association, but rather the higher moral authority which claims obedience in the name of God. What a mighty energy must such an organization develop, but at the same time how dangerous a power and how subversive of the spiritual nature of the Church, so soon as this spiritual authority is translated into the terms of a legal, formally competent, and formally binding authority!<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The last two paragraphs are substantially, and in part literally, from Sohm, pp. 54 sqq. The whole of the following section (§ 18) is likewise from Sohm, reproducing substantially § 7 of his work, pp. 56 sqq., with omission or abbreviation of some of the notes.

## § 18, ELECTION AND ORDINATION

If in the above we have rightly characterized the relation of the teacher to the assembly or congregation, what significance are we to attach to the act of election and the rite of laying on of hands? It is precisely in relation to the teaching office that we have the earliest evidence of election in the Church; the idea and practice of election (and ordination) was developed in this connection, and in this connection we can therefore best discover its essential character.

St. Paul asserts that he was called to the apostolate "not from men, neither through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Gal. 1:1). This solemn affirmation of the apostle must be regarded as a protest against the insinuation of his adversaries, that he had received his election and commission *only* through men. To make this charge plausible the positive fact at least must have been capable of ready proof; namely, that St. Paul did on a certain definite and well known occasion receive an election and ordination to the apostolate through men—so far as the formal and outward features of the transaction were concerned. That is to say, St. Paul's expression in Gal. 1:1 by no means excludes human instrumentality: on the contrary it implies just such an occurrence as is related in Acts 13:1 sqq. There was such a thing therefore as an election to the apostolate through men which was properly to be regarded as election through God. How these two points of view were united we see clearly in the account of the transaction as given in the Acts. Barnabas and Saul were reckoned among the "prophets and teachers" of the Church at Antioch, until they were singled

out through the instrumentality of a prophet, and appointed by unanimous consent to an apostolic mission (cf. 14:14). The details here mentioned are few but significant: the assembly had prepared itself by fasting to receive a divine revelation; in the midst of the assembly the Holy Ghost spoke through the mouth of a prophet, saying, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;" popular assent to the prophetic appointment is implied in the subsequent acts, in which the assembly as a whole participated; that is, in prayer and fasting with the laying on of hands for the confirmation of the apostolic charisma.<sup>1</sup>

Another account of the election of an apostle is given in Acts 1:23-26. The assembled brotherhood elected two men between whom the lot was to decide which might count as elected by God. "The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."<sup>2</sup>

Another case is the election of Timothy to the office of an evangelist (apostle in the later sense): he was elected "through prophecies" which testified to his charisma, and that "before many witnesses." The record of this event is significant, though the details

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sohm, note 1, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> The significance of the lot is showed by the prayer which preceded it: "Thou, Lord, . . . show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen." The ordinary mode of ascertaining the divine choice was through the prophetic voice: the lot was exceptional, but its significance was the same. By way of exception the will of God may be revealed by a miracle or portent: *e.g.* the election of the Roman bishop Fabian (Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 29:3, 4) was decided by a dove which descended upon him. Witness of the Lord's resurrection, as an antecedent condition of apostleship, must of course be assumed in the case of Justus and Matthias,—and of Barnabas. St. Paul expressly claimed to fulfil this condition (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8, 9).



have to be gathered from several sources : 1 Tim. 1 : 18, "according to the prophecies which led to thee," that is, occasioned his election (κατὰ τὰς προαγούσας ἐπὶ σὲ προφητείας); 4 : 14, thy charisma was given thee "through (διὰ) prophecy with (μετὰ) the laying on of hands of the presbytery;" 6 : 12, "thou didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses;" 2 Tim. 1 : 6, "the charisma of God which is in thee through (διὰ) the laying on of my hands;" 2 : 2, "the things which thou hast heard from me among (διὰ) many witnesses."<sup>3</sup> Prophecy designated Timothy, and indeed before many witnesses, — that is, in the Church assembly. The act was completed by a confession of faith on the part of Timothy, by an address (and prayer) on the part of St. Paul, and by the laying on of hands by St. Paul and the presbytery in common. The assent of the assembly to the prophetic designation of Timothy is indicated by the participation of the presbytery in the laying on of hands, and also by the fact that the assembled brethren are referred to as "witnesses."

In all three accounts there emerge two distinct sides to the transaction: on the one hand the witness of God, on the other the witness of the assembly. God's witness is manifested ordinarily through the medium of

<sup>3</sup> That all these passages refer to the same occasion, namely, the election and ordination of Timothy, is proved by Holtzmann, *Pastoralbriefe*, pp. 227 sqq. The present argument is hardly affected by the question of the historicity of this account, or of the accounts cited above from the Acts. The point that concerns us here is simply the procedure ordinarily followed in an election to office within the early Christian period, and there can be no doubt that the definite characteristics which here appear correspond perfectly with the notions of primitive Christianity: i. e. (1) election to the office of an evangelist (apostle), (2) election or designation through prophecy in the midst of an assembly, (3) assent of the assembly, accompanied with prayer and the laying on of hands.

prophecy, — by the voice of a gifted teacher. To the witness of God is joined the witness of the assembly, which signifies *assent* to the word of the prophet, a *recognition* that it is God himself who speaks through the mouth of man. The election therefore which is accomplished by a prophetic choice with the subsequent assent of the assembly, is not an election from men, neither by a man, but through God. The election is in its nature a spiritual, and not a legal act: the officer elect is not elected by the assembly as a corporation clothed with any sort of a legal authority, but by the Holy Ghost.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In 1 Cor. 12:28 and Ephes. 4:11 it is said in common of apostles, prophets, and teachers that they were placed or appointed by God. From these passages Harnack (*Proleg.* p. 97) infers that officers of this class were not elected by the Churches, and in this fact he discovers a fundamental distinction between apostles, prophets, and teachers on the one hand, and bishops and deacons on the other. The notion is that the former were elected by God for the whole of Christendom, the latter were elected by the congregation for the service of the local society. It is clear from the above that no such hard and fast distinction existed. Apostles, prophets, and teachers might also be elected by the Ecclesia. In regard to apostles at least (exclusive of the original eleven) election seems to have been the rule. But what is formally an election through men is spiritually an election through God. It was precisely the same in the case of bishops and deacons: they too were elected, but their election counted as an appointment by God, — cf. Acts 20:28, ὑμᾶς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἔθετο ἐπισκόπους, and above, n. 21, p. 235. Precisely the same notion persisted in a later age. Ignatius, *Philad.* 1:1, the bishop of Philadelphia is lauded as one who holds his office “not of himself, neither through men.” Cyprian, *epist.* 48:4, *dominus* que sacerdotes sibi in ecclesia sua eligere et constituere dignetur; *ep.* 55:8, *de dei judicio* qui episcopum eum fecit; . . . factus est autem Cornelius episcopus *de dei et Christi ejus judicio*; *ep.* 59:5, post *divinum judicium*, post populi suffragium, post coepiscoporum consensum judicem se non jam episcopis sed *deo* faceret; *ep.* 66:1, post *deum* judicem, qui sacerdotes facit, te velle . . . *de dei et Christi judicio* judicare; *ep.* 66:4, *deo* episcopum constituenti; *ep.* 66:9, *majestatem dei* qui sacerdotes ordinat Christi. — When the early texts describe an election they speak, now, of the assembly as the agent; again, of some authoritative individual, like the apostles Barnabas and Paul, or the evangelists Timothy and Titus; and again, of God, Christ, or the Holy Ghost. In all this there is no contra-

Election to the teaching office was followed by a rite which was very early developed, if it was not strictly an original and invariable constituent of appointment to office; namely, the laying on of hands with accompanying prayer.<sup>5</sup> The prayer denotes petition for the

diction, the same thing is meant in each case: election depends upon a *revelation* of the divine will, which is ordinarily given through the *prophecy* of a gifted teacher, and which receives the witnessing *assent* of the assembly. What is decisive for the Church is *not that this or that assembly has made choice of an officer* — the act of the assembly is no election at all in the secular sense of the word — but that *God has chosen*. It is true in particular of election to the office of bishop or deacon that it is an “election” only in this — improper — sense of the word. Hence in this case, too, election by the assembly is merely an act of *assent*, — the classical reference is 1 Clem. 44 : 3, *συνευδοκησάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης*. This whole range of ideas which was associated with election or appointment to office in the Church, was altogether peculiar to Christianity; — yet what becomes of it all in the hands of Hatch, who assumes to explain all circumstances of early Christian life by comparison with the secular institutions of the state or of civil societies? The spiritual character of the act is done away with, the conception is said to be precisely the same as in the case of appointment to civil office, and that for five reasons, of which it may suffice here to mention one (*Organization*, pp. 129 sq.): “All the elements of appointment to ecclesiastical office were also the elements of appointment to civil office. These elements were nomination, election, approval, and the declaration of election by a competent officer.” Further, to explain a marked peculiarity of language in the ecclesiastical sources, it is affirmed that the secular sources show “that, according to the constitutional fiction which we find in Rome itself, especially during the Republican period, the person appointed is said to be appointed, not by the people who elected, but by the officer who presided at the election.” In opposition to such a view as this Moberly (*Ministerial Priesthood*, p. 105) justly affirms: “The idea of a secular appointment *as secular*, a distinction of convenience drawn on the basis of convenience, without reference to the divine purpose, or consciousness of being instrumental to a divine act, is the one idea which may be regarded as wholly untenable” in reference to the Christian ministry.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 6 : 6, appointment of the “seven” at Jerusalem — “when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.” 13 : 3, election of Paul and Barnabas — “when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them.” In these two cases both the laying on of hands and prayer are mentioned, while in 1 Tim. 4 : 14 and 2 Tim. 1 : 6 (election of

Holy Ghost.<sup>6</sup> What is the significance of the laying on of hands?

The Christian rite of the laying on of hands, whatever may be its relation to the Jewish usage, is not adequately explained by it; for the instances of its application were very different in the two cases, and its significance could hardly have been the same.<sup>7</sup> The

Timothy as evangelist) only the laying on of hands is referred to, and, on the other hand, in Acts 14:23 (appointment of elders) only the prayer. The later development makes it certain that the two acts were ordinarily inseparable, and that where only one is mentioned we are justified in assuming the other. Laying on of hands for the purpose of ordination occurs only in the Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, but at all events the development of the custom belongs to early Christian times.

<sup>6</sup> The petition for the presence or gift of the Holy Ghost constitutes the invariable and unquestionably original content of all later ordination prayers, — cf. *Canon. Hippol.* III. § 13, IV. § 31, V. § 39; *Apost. Const.* VIII. cc. 5, 15, 16, 18, 20–22. When we have mention in the Acts of the Apostles of *fasting* as an accompaniment of the ordination prayer (13:3 & 14:23), we may understand that the prayer is a petition for the Holy Ghost—offered not only in behalf of the person to be ordained, but also of those who utter the prayer (*Apost. Const.* VIII. c. 5, “pour out among us the power of thy guiding Spirit”), because they are about to perform the laying on of hands. It is still the rule in Catholic ordination that it must be given *jejuno a jejunantibus*. *Comp. Murat. Fragm.* line 11, *conjejunante mihi triduo, et quid cuique fuerit revelatum, . . . nobis enarremus*. *Hermas, Vision*, III. 1:2, “having fasted often and prayed to the Lord that he would make known to me the revelation.” *Harnack, Proleg.* p. 148 in the note:—fasting is a preparation for the reception of the Spirit, whether it be for the purpose of a revelation or of an impartation of the Spirit (laying on of hands).

<sup>7</sup> Driver contributes to the Oxford Conference on *Priesthood and Sacrifice* (Sanday editor, p. 39) an interesting note on the various uses and substantial meaning of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament. He concludes that the ceremony seems “to symbolize the transmission, or delegation, of a moral character or quality, or of responsibility or authority (or, of power to represent another).” Various aspects of the idea of *transmission* or *delegation* are illustrated in the case of instituting a successor to office (Num. 27:18, 20; Deut. 34:9; — the rabbinical laying on of hands at the institution of a judge or teacher is to be regarded from the same point of view. Cf. *Hatch, Organization*, p. 135, and



meaning of the New Testament ceremony is substantially defined by the content of the accompanying prayer.<sup>8</sup> Doubtless its significance differed as it was

Schürer, *Jewish People*, div. II. vol. 1. p. 177). The laying on of hands was employed in the case of all kinds of animal sacrifice (burnt-offering Lev. 1: 4, peace-offering Lev. 3: 2, 8, 13, sin-offering Lev. 4: 4, 15, 24), where the offerer lays his hands upon the head of the victim: in the case of the scape-goat (Lev. 16: 21), upon which the high priest lays his hands; of a blasphemer condemned to death (Lev. 24: 14; Susanna, v. 34), on whose head the witnesses lay their hands; and finally in the case of the installation of the Levites, upon whom the *people* lay their hands (Num. 8: 10), offering them as a substitutionary *sacrifice* for the first-born of all Israel (v. 18) — hence in vv. 11, 13 they are to be “waved” before the Lord. There was no special laying on of hands in the induction of the priest. The Hebrew word denoted more exactly to *lean* or *rest* the hands; the implication certainly is that manual *contact* was essential to the act; and all the cases of its use indicate that the notion was a mechanical one. This is true of the laying on of hands in blessing, which is the only case that comes near to the New Testament use. It is only so that we can explain the difference between the blessing accorded by the right and the left hand (Gen. 48: 14, 18). The blessing, according to the Old Testament view, is not so much prayed for as *given* (transmitted), — with the right hand the stronger, with the left the lesser blessing. Such a notion is utterly impossible from the New Testament standpoint. In the Church, the laying on of hands in blessing constituted one case at least in which manual contact was not accounted important. In the *Apost. Const.* (VIII. 37, 38) the general blessing of the bishop at morning and evening prayer is called the laying on of hands (χειροθεσία) from the gesture which accompanied it. Laying on of hands for the healing of the sick was unknown to the Old Testament (Elisha laid his whole body upon the dead boy, 2 Kings 4: 34), as was also its use for the impartation or confirmation of spiritual gifts.

<sup>8</sup> Imposition of hands was never employed in the Church without accompanying prayer, which asked specifically for that which was supposed to be given in the act. It was not, however, regarded as a mere gesture, or unessential adjunct of the prayer, — except, perhaps, in the case of benediction. The close relation of this act to prayer is indicated in the oft quoted and much abused saying of St. Augustine (*de Baptismo c. Donat.* lib. III. c. 16): Quid est enim aliud [manum impositio] nisi oratio super hominem? St. Augustine's point is, that though baptism itself cannot be repeated (even the baptism of schismatics), yet the laying on of hands (confirmation) which accompanies baptism may be, — “for what is it but a prayer (uttered) over a man?” The practice of reconfirming schismatics upon their entrance into the Catholic Church shows that the rite was re-

employed in benediction, "confirmation," exorcism, or ordination; but in all of these cases there appears a generic idea, which serves to explain the meaning of the laying on of hands as used in ordination.

One of the applications of this rite which unquestionably belongs to the earliest Christian period is the laying on of hands for the healing of the sick. The meaning of it is here plain, and hence we may draw inferences as to its character in other cases. The laying on of hands for the purpose of healing denotes exorcism, a driving out of the demoniac power of evil by the Spirit of God.<sup>9</sup> The laying on of hands is here

garded as a sort of exorcism, like the imposition of hands in absolution. In this case St. Augustine regards it as confirming the charisma of charity. His argument here will not bear to be stretched beyond its particular application, least of all to the laying on of hands in ordination, for it is in this very work (lib. I.) that he lays the foundation for the doctrine of the sacrament of orders, arguing that ordination confers an indelible character and (like baptism) cannot be repeated. This phrase of his, moreover, does not imply any disparagement of the act of imposition of hands, and so does not furnish any support to Hatch's contention (*Organization*, p. 135) that the rite was not regarded as essential. On the other hand, it suggests a serious obstacle to Hatch's light method of disposing of the rite of the laying on of hands in ordination, as though it were something which throws no light upon the character of Church office, and hints at no difference between appointment to this and to civil office (*ib.* pp. 132 sqq.). Such an argument can be made plausible only by ignoring the prayer which defines the character of the act; or by ignoring the specific content of the prayer, as Hatch does in his art. *Ordination* in the *Dict. Christ. Ant.* p. 1503, remarking only that "it was both natural and fitting that any appointment should be accompanied by prayer." Prayer and the laying on of hands was not the only religious element in election to Church office, for we have seen that the whole was a religious and spiritual transaction, but it was the most *ostensibly* religious element, the hardest to misinterpret, the one which stands most manifestly opposed to the notion that appointment to Church office signified the same as appointment to civil office. Cf. pp. 24 sq.

<sup>9</sup> The official exorcist of the later organization corresponds in origin with the possessor of the "gift of healing" (1 Cor. 12 : 28) : one of his principal functions is the healing of the sick. *Apost. Const.* VIII. 25, ἐποκρίστης οὐ χειροτονεῖται . . . ὁ γὰρ λαβὼν χάρισμα ἰαμάτων δι' ἀποκαλύψεως

not a mere insignificant accompaniment of prayer, but a *means* whereby the Spirit of God which resides in the actor works upon the patient. The same significance must belong to the imposition of hands in the other cases of its use. The imposition of hands upon one who is elected to a teaching function is also an instrumentality for the effectual influence of God's Spirit upon him. Only as we recognize this as the starting-point can we understand the development of the Catholic view, which actually regarded the laying on of hands in ordination as a mechanical impartation of the Holy Ghost. But the laying on of hands presupposed an election to the teaching function — it assumed that the person receiving this rite was *already* chosen by God, and that he *already possessed* God's spirit and the spiritual charisma which furnished him with the faculty for his office.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the laying on of hands assumes the charisma and does not *cause* it. The consequence is, that the imposition of hands upon one who is elected to the office of teacher can have only the effect of strengthening or confirming the charisma. It, too, represents a sort of exorcism; its purpose is to

ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἀναδείκνυται. Cf. *Canon. Hippol.* VIII. §§ 53, 54. *Egypt. Ch. Order*, c. 39 (Achelis, *C. H.* p. 74). Harnack, *Texte*, II. 5, p. 74. According to Eusebius, *H. E.* VI. 43 : 14, Novatian was treated in his illness by exorcists. *Passio S. Genesii*, c. 2 (Ruinart, p. 237), the saint in his illness calls for a presbyter with the exorcist. *Passio S. Procopii*, c. 1 (Ruinart, p. 311), ibi (in Scythopolis) ecclesiae tria ministeria praebebat : unum in legendi officio, alterum in Syri interpretatione sermonis, et tertium *adversus daemones manus impositione* consummans. He was at once lector (and interpreter) and exorcist — the imposition of hands was the means employed for exorcism as well as for healing. The passages here quoted from the Acts of the Martyrs belong to the end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth. See further Achelis, *ibid.* p. 157.

<sup>10</sup> The "seven men" were already "full of the Spirit" before their ordination (Acts 6 : 3, 5); and Barnabas and Paul had the gifts of prophecy and teaching before they received the laying on of hands (Acts 13 : 1, 3).

overcome in the recipient of ordination the powers of sin which oppose his charisma and hinder its free exercise.<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, the rite does not generate the charisma, but it does strengthen it. The laying on of hands in ordination signifies substantially *confirmation*. The same significance appears in the other two uses of the rite which were early developed: in "confirmation" properly so-called, that is, the laying on of hands which accompanied baptism; and in the laying on of hands in the case of absolution. What is designed in all these cases is a strengthening of the spiritual power which is already assumed to be present (in the elected officer, the baptized person, or the penitent), and the complete overcoming of evil.<sup>12</sup> To him who already effectually

<sup>11</sup> In this we have an explanation of the view which attributed to the imposition of hands in ordination the effect of absolving from sins — *Concil. Neocaesar.* (circa 314–325) c. 9, τὰ γὰρ λοιπὰ ἁμαρτήματα (with the exception of unchastity) ἔφασαν οἱ πολλοὶ καὶ τὴν χειροθεσίαν ἀφιέναι. We may recall here the "confession" which Timothy made on the occasion of his ordination (1 Tim. 6: 12). Corresponding to this we have the opposite view that through sin (viz. deadly sin) the effect of ordination is obliterated: 1 Clem. *ad Cor.* 44: 4, the deposition of the bishops is unjustifiable only so long as they perform the functions of their office "*unblamably and piously*"; Polyc. *ad Phil.* 11, Valens lost his office because he embezzled Church money; Cypr. *ep.* 66, 5, 7, the bishop who sins gravely is no longer a legitimate bishop (cf. *ib.* 67: 3 & 70: 2; and *Apost. Const.* VIII. 2). Hence the possibility of several ordinations — cf. the Gallican inscription of the year 461 (*C. I. G.* 9259) mentioned by Hatch (p. 137 note), δις γενόμενος πρεσβύτερος. Catholicism, owing to its doctrine of the mechanical effect of ordination, had to give up the practice of repeating ordination. Callistus, it is well known, was the first to oppose Cyprian's dictum (*Philosoph.* ix. 12), οὗτος ἐδογματίσεν, ὅπως εἰ ἐπίσκοπος ἁμαρτοῖ τι, εἰ καὶ πρὸς θάνατον, μὴ δεῖν κατατίθεσθαι. His successor Stephen confirmed this "dogma" (O. Ritschl, *Cyprian*, p. 138), and in the Donatist controversy Augustine found himself obliged to affirm the inalienable character of ordination (*de Baptism. c. Donat.* I. c. 1). Cf. Ritschl, *Entstehung*, pp. 566 sqq.

<sup>12</sup> For a notion of the inward likeness of the various sorts of imposition of hands see *Apost. Const.* III. 15 (confirmation is compared to ordination — one gives the general priesthood, the other the special), and *ibid.*



possesses the gift of God's Spirit it is given again, by the imposition of hands, in a new measure for deliverance from the power of sin.

We see consequently that the laying on of hands is a transaction of a purely spiritual nature.<sup>13</sup> It bestows no formal office or outward authority: its purpose is to strengthen the charisma which the recipient already possesses.

Practically considered, the laying on of hands represents also the *verification* of the possession of a charisma, an outward testimony, which, like the whole act of ordination (including election), and the letters of commendation which frequently accompanied it, had simply the effect of making it easier in point of fact for the recipient to obtain recognition of his vocation on the part of other assemblies.<sup>14</sup>

Let us consider the case of a man who is elected to

II. 39, 41 (the imposition of hands in absolution is compared to confirmation).

<sup>13</sup> Hence the association of the laying on of hands with prayer. The above interpretation excludes on the one hand the Catholic view, according to which the laying on of hands constitutes the source and origin of the charisma; and on the other the interpretation of Ritschl (*Entstehung*, p. 379), which makes it a purely outward act, a mere accompaniment of prayer. But while the interpretation in the text draws a clear distinction between the primitive Christian view and the Catholic (as also the Jewish), it yet makes it clear that the Catholic view was a natural outcome of the primitive conception.

<sup>14</sup> From this point of view it is possible to explain the two phrases which refer to Timothy's charisma (1 Tim. 4 : 14; 2 Tim. 1 : 6): it is said in the one place that he possesses his charisma *διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν*; and in the other, that he had it *διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν*. The prophecy has unquestionably merely the value of a testimony, but in both passages it is put on the same plane with the imposition of hands. The *διὰ* denotes in both cases (as the first passage clearly shows), not the causality which accounts for the *existence* of the charisma, but that which accounts for its *recognition*. Most modern German writers assume a discrepancy between these two passages, and interpret the latter in the Catholic sense.

the office of an evangelist. Shall the election and laying on of hands which he receives guarantee him any legal authority or privilege in relation to other assemblies? More generally, is his ordination competent to *make* him in fact an evangelist (apostle) of Jesus Christ? Impossible! The office which he is called upon to exercise signifies an office of *Christendom*, not merely of this or that individual congregation. There can be no other teaching vocation than that which is intended for the whole Church. He is also *elected* by Christendom, for every assembly of Christians in the name of Christ is an assembly of Christendom (p. 138). Not only that assembly which elected him, however, but every other assembly is a manifestation of Christendom, and equally free on its part to accord or to deny him recognition as a teacher. The election and ordination has therefore no legal significance, since the electing assembly itself does not constitute a definite legal corporation or local congregation, the very notion of the individual Church being unknown, and only the notion of the whole Church being alive in the consciousness of early Christianity. Even in relation to the community which elects, the election and ordination as such confer no *rights*: the right to claim hearing and obedience as a teacher resides in the charisma; with or without the vote of the congregation that right exists, but without the charisma no vote can create the right. We may see from this that it is essentially indifferent how great or how small was the electing assembly, or where it was assembled. It is only with a view to obtaining practical recognition in a broader sphere that the size of the assembly can be of importance.

The fundamental and decisive fact which determines

this point, and in general the whole line of thought with which we have hitherto been occupied, is this: there is as yet within Christendom *no such thing as a congregation with a legal organization* which binds and comprehends the individual by formal ties. As yet there are only *assemblies* (*Ecclesiae*), now large and now small, now here and now there, mere waves as it were, rising and sinking in the great stream of Christendom, manifesting visibly the life and power of the Church, but without possessing any *legal* representative authority. The assembly being once dissolved, no trace of it is any more to be found. After it, as before it and in it, there subsists but one sole entity, *the whole Ecclesia upon earth*, and by its very nature this universal Church (Christendom) can endure no human — that is, *no legal* — authority.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EUCHARISTIC ASSEMBLY

#### § 19, THE EUCHARIST—ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHURCH ORDER AND ORGANIZATION

WE have seen how the charismatic organization of Christendom (the body of Christ) was manifested, and in a sense *formulated*, in the assemblies for instruction. These assemblies, however, as they have been described above, contained hardly any elements which might serve even as a starting-point for the *legal* organization which was subsequently developed. Neither apostles, prophets, nor teachers ever attained a *legal status* in the Church; and the free service of instruction itself disappeared with the development of Catholicism.

One sort of assembly there was, however, which goes far to explain the subsequent development of Church order and organization,—the Eucharistic assembly. The Eucharist is the highest expression of the spiritual worship of the Church, but none the less it is — and in a still greater degree it *was* — the most material feature of Christian worship. It exhibits the paradox which is so deeply characteristic of Christianity as a whole and of the very nature of its Founder — the spiritual manifested in the flesh. There is hardly any element essential to the Eucharist which is not material — there is none, however, which is not spiritual. A material



feast is here the symbol of a spiritual fellowship (with Christ and with the brotherhood) and the medium of a heavenly nourishment. We have seen that the Catholic or legal conception of Christianity was not a primitive conception; therefore it was not an implication of the primitive Eucharist. This feast spiritualized even the material elements that composed it — offerings in money and in kind (in short, Church property), as well as the consecrated oblations which were received as the body and blood of Christ. A legal notion was not necessarily involved in this: it was indeed theoretically excluded. But in point of fact it was in connection with the Eucharist and the Eucharistic assembly that a legal conception of the congregation and of the ministry was first formulated. When the spiritual forces that were at work in the Church became feeble, such a conception of the nature of the Christian society must have appeared obvious, if not inevitable, and the Eucharistic assembly constituted the readiest point of application for it. The reason in short is this, that the Eucharistic assembly was the assembly which exhibited the congregation in its most definite and exclusive character, and the ministry in its most definite and exclusive functions.

To make here a detailed investigation into the character and procedure of the Eucharistic assembly would be by no means foreign to our present purpose, but it would involve a digression from the direct line of our argument. The study of the Eucharist involves and explains some of the largest problems of early Church history. For, aside from all doctrinal questions, not only is the form of the Catholic organization (bishop, deacons, presbyters) determined by it, but the whole development of the liturgy centres in it, the whole

economic administration derives from it, and the very character of the Church building (the basilica and every subsequent form) is prescribed by it.

The essential features, however, of the Eucharistic assembly and the main lines of its development are so simple that they can be described in a few words, and so palpable that they hardly admit of controversy.

There can be no doubt that in the earliest time the Eucharist was celebrated in conjunction with the agape in a private house where all the disciples were gathered about a common table. It may appear as though there were little room here for distinctions of rank, and not much to suggest the development of a formal organization. But both Gentile and Jewish usage required a president at the feast, and this was particularly the case with regard to the Passover, from which the Eucharistic feast was derived. In the Eucharist there were two functions especially that fell to the part of the president: namely, the breaking of the bread, and the thanksgiving prayer — both of them acts which are so characteristic of this sacrament that they have given us the two names under which it has been most commonly known in primitive and later times. Obviously, these acts must be performed by one person. Such was the significance of these acts that whosoever performed them was thereby constituted president of the feast, with all that this office implied in the way of the administration of the Eucharist and the disposition of the oblations. For he who performed these acts was recognized as sitting in Christ's seat, blessing as he blessed, breaking the loaf as he brake it, and distributing like him the bread and wine to the disciples.

This is not to say that the right to celebrate the Eucharist belonged exclusively to any one class of officers

or to a formally appointed president. The common priesthood of all believers means very little, if it does not mean that each is inherently capable of breaking the bread and offering the prayer of thanksgiving to God at the Eucharistic feast. Christ's promise to be with his disciples wherever two or three are gathered together is surely general enough to include the Eucharistic assembly; and where Christ is among his disciples there is the whole Church and all the powers of it. These ideas were still current as late as the beginning of the third century, as we see from Tertullian's well known saying:<sup>1</sup> "Are not also we laity priests? . . . When there are no clergy thou makest the offering and baptizest and art priest for thyself alone. When three are present, there is the Church, although they be laymen." Tertullian does not contend for this principle, he merely assumes it as a premise for his argument: therein lies the proof that it was not an individual opinion of his own, nor a distinctive tenet of Montanism, but a commonly accepted position, a primitive tradition which had not yet been successfully impugned.

At the same time, there can be little doubt that in Tertullian's age, so far as the Eucharist is concerned, this was hardly more than a theoretical position. Even in the earliest age this principle, as Tertullian expresses it, did not aptly represent the common view or practice, simply because the idea of an exclusive priesthood or *clerus* within the Church was not yet distinctly conceived: whoever presided at the Eucharist was *ipso facto* regarded as an officer, and in the early Church there was no more definite criterion of office than this. Then too, the conditions posited by Tertullian were realized only in rare cases of necessity. The primitive idea

<sup>1</sup> *De exhort. cast.* c. 7.

that every gathering of disciples, though they be but two or three, constitutes a Church, did not tend to make men content with the minimum expression of Christian fellowship—rather it prompted the effort to make every assembly of Christendom practically coincident so far as possible with the local brotherhood (see p. 131). This was especially true of the Eucharistic assembly, for the Eucharist was the preëminent expression of the social side of Christianity. Where only two or three could get together, doubtless they alone broke bread in memory of their Lord. But that was an exception.

It seems, however, to have been by no means exceptional for the disciples to meet together for the Eucharist, as for other purposes, in assemblies which comprised only a part of the local brotherhood. There were assemblies ("Churches") which were accustomed to meet, with what regularity we do not know, in this or that private house. It is likely that there were several distinct assemblies of this sort in every considerable town. We can readily represent to ourselves that in the earliest period the number that could meet in one place was restricted by the limitations of the room and by other conditions; and it is evident that by the time the Church was able to construct appropriate houses for worship the number of disciples had already grown too great to be united in one building. Such at least must have been the situation in the larger towns. Yet in spite of such distinct assemblies or Churches it was customary, as we see from the Apocalypse as well as from St. Paul's epistles, to describe the totality of the disciples in one town as the Church in that place. The conception of unity was strong, and without implying any disparagement



of the more partial expressions of the local Church, there seems from the first to have been a distinction drawn between such minor assemblies, and what we may call the principal assembly, the assembly which *counted* as an assembly of the whole local community, even if all were not actually included in it at any given time (see pp. 121, 131). It is the principal assembly for the Eucharist which was of chief importance for the development of Church organization — though the existence of minor Eucharistic assemblies may perhaps explain one feature of early organization ; namely, the plurality of bishops.

The Eucharistic feast requires a president — that was one of the first suggestions which prompted the development of formal office in the Church. All could not preside at the Eucharist at once, neither was it appropriate that each should preside in turn, from the greatest unto the least. Who then shall preside at the Eucharist ? The answer presented no theoretical difficulty, though it might be embarrassed in practice by jealousies and differences of personal judgment. Whether the assembly were large or small, the question was the same : substantially it was equivalent to the question, Who, among those present at the particular time and place, is most worthy to sit in the seat of Christ ? Such being the nature of the choice, it is obvious that in the same community and under the same conditions there would be a certain permanence in the presidency — it was ever the most highly revered disciple that must preside. But this did not imply as of necessity a formal appointment, still less did it constitute a legal right.

But the conditions were *not* always the same. If, for example, an apostle were resident in the community

or present as a visitor, he, no doubt, must have presided. So at Troas it was St. Paul who broke the bread (Acts 20 : 11). At Jerusalem, where there were many apostles, it was St. James, we must imagine, who, on account of the veneration in which he was held as the brother of the Lord, was accorded the Lord's place at the Eucharistic table. Lacking an apostle, an evangelist might assume this honor as a matter of course. The position of leadership which Timothy enjoyed at Ephesus and Titus at Crete surely implies presidency in the Eucharistic assembly as well as pre-eminent authority in the assembly for instruction. The evangelist of a later type whom we encounter in the *Didache* under the name of "apostle" must have presided at the Eucharist, for he was to be "received as the Lord" (xi. 4). At all events, this same book (x. 7) incidentally reveals the fact that the prophets, who came next in rank, might be expected to offer the Eucharistic prayer, and that with a freedom which was not permitted to the bishops, who were at that time already bound to a formula. In short, the same officers that enjoyed leadership in the assemblies for instruction—the charismatically endowed teachers—were the natural presidents of the Eucharist—*when such were to be had*. The gifted teachers were those that enjoyed the highest consideration in Christendom, and hence the presidency at the "table of the Lord,"—for this reason among others, that the most distinctively religious act in connection with the Eucharist was the prayer, and prayer was a function of the teaching gift.

But such spiritual teachers were *not* always to be had. Even in the Apostolic Age they were the exception rather than the rule. The Eucharist, however, was

an ordinary, a weekly festival; it might not be deferred to await the coming of a teacher of the higher sort, and indeed it needed no extraordinary gifts for its administration. It was incumbent upon the disciples to appoint the fittest of their number to this dignity. The choice would naturally be made from among the older men of the congregation (*πρεσβύτεροι*), those more particularly who had had the longest experience of the Christian faith.

The elders were more or less distinctly recognized as a class within the community, though without any official status whatever. The earliest distinction within the Church — apart from such as were due to extraordinary spiritual endowments — was the general distinction of elder and younger. Seniority has ever been one of the chief grounds of precedence or presidency, and it was as natural for the president of the Eucharist (the bishop) to be chosen from among the elders, as for the ministers at the Eucharist (the deacons) to be chosen from the younger men.

But there were a number of elders, of whom some only were to be appointed to this dignity. What were the grounds of choice? In St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus<sup>2</sup> the moral character of the bishop is what is chiefly insisted upon. No exceptional virtue is required, in particular no ascetic virtue: he must be an elder who manifests a sterling character in all social relations, but particularly as husband and father, having "good testimony from them that are without" as well as the esteem of the brethren.<sup>3</sup> In Titus 1:7 he is

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1: 5-9.

<sup>3</sup> In the *Didache*, xv. 1 the character required of bishops and deacons is summed up in the phrase "worthy of the Lord": it is added that they must be "men of meek temper, and not lovers of money, and true, and approved; for they perform for you the same ministry as the prophets

called "God's steward," and in both passages it is required that he be "not greedy of filthy lucre" — this evidently in view of the fact that as president of the Eucharist he must receive and dispense the gifts which were there brought, and which constituted the main source of Church property.

The assumption is that the bishop is not possessed of extraordinary gifts of teaching; and yet some practical talent of teaching is required of him. Teaching is the highest function in Christendom, and we can hardly conceive that one who was not distinguished among his brethren for acquaintance with the truth and for power to teach could have been accorded the presidency in any assembly or Church. In 1 Tim. 3:2 it is required merely that the bishop be "apt to teach" (διδασκτικόν): in Titus 1:9 this is expanded, — "holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching (διδασκαλία), that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine (διδασχῆ), and to convict the gainsayers." This implies that the bishop's faculty for teaching found exercise in other spheres besides the Eucharistic assembly, namely, in public instruction, in private counsel, and in a general oversight of the affairs of the community. How could it have been otherwise? On the one hand, it is

and teachers. Despise them not, therefore, for they are the honored (τιμιμημένοι) among you together with the prophets and teachers." Likewise one of the tests of the true prophet (xi. 8) is the observation that he "has the ways of the Lord" (τοὺς τρόπους κυρίου). It is an implication of this book that the bishops and deacons are primarily Eucharistic officers, but it is assumed that they might also perform various other offices which belonged especially to the prophets and teachers. The bishop was the ordinary president of the Eucharist, but so little did this constitute a *right* over the Eucharist, that any prophet who was present was expected to take the seat of honor and offer the prayer (x. 7). The most significant factor in the development of Church organization was the gradual fixing of the bishop's rights over the Eucharist.



evident that the men who most laid themselves out to minister to the material or spiritual needs of the congregation, who were most looked to for counsel and help, would be the ones most naturally chosen as presidents of the Eucharist: on the other hand, it is no less clear that this dignity, the most expressly official dignity in Christendom, must have implied a general superintendence of congregational affairs—and all the more so because the distribution of the Church funds belonged essentially to the office. The name *ἐπίσκοπος*, by which such officers were known, characterizes them with respect rather to these wider functions than to the specific function of presiding at the Eucharistic assembly. In Acts 20:28 St. Paul says to the bishops from Ephesus, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops (or overseers), to feed the Church of God.” But we must remember that it was the connection with the Eucharist which gave the bishops an official dignity, and which explains the subsequent development of their office.

The deacons were as closely associated with the Eucharist as was the bishop, and for the most part their functions were obviously determined by that relation. This office corresponded to a practical need: it was necessary that some persons should be appointed to serve the disciples as they sat at table—a service which was no mere formality so long as the Eucharist and the love feast were one. The selection for such a service would naturally be made from among the younger men. But it was characteristic of Christianity to regard every service in the Church as a claim to honor (cf. Luke 22:26, 27); and moreover it is generally true that any official distinction, in a community that knows

few distinctions of rank, is apt to become an honorable distinction.

The moral qualifications of the deacons, as required in 1 Tim. 3: 8-13, are substantially the same as those expected of the bishop. Bishops and deacons were closely related, as the nature of their functions at the Eucharist explains, and hence it is that they were commonly mentioned together. Outside of the assembly the deacons acted as the bishop's agents in distributing the alms of the Church. This service tended to become more and more important. Even in the earliest period it must have brought them into such close personal relations with the congregation as sufficiently explains the functions of private counsel and instruction with which we find them charged in the second century. The power and importance of the deacons advanced *pari passu* with the increasing authority of the bishop. There is no point in regard to the organization of the early Church which is in the main so simple as the position of these officers.

The position of the elders or presbyters cannot be so clearly defined, and the right apprehension of the subject has been prejudiced by age-long misconception. The name elder indicated originally no formal office whatever, but only a vaguely defined class of persons who were distinguished for their greater age, or longer experience of the Christian life. The bishops were selected from this class, and so might be spoken of generally as elders. Hence the confusion that has so long prevailed about these two names. But some apostles, too, were known by this title; and at the end of the second century, long after it had become an official title, it was still used quite in the early sense to denote certain of the converts of the apostles.

The distinction between the elder and the younger members of the congregation was fundamentally independent of the Eucharist; but it was in the Eucharistic assembly that it received the most express recognition, and it was with the development of the Eucharistic service that the elders gradually acquired official rank and precise functions as the council of the bishop and the representatives of the people, — becoming themselves in the final development the ordinary presidents of the Eucharist and the sole parochial pastors.

To understand how the elders might attain an official status in connection with the Eucharist, it is necessary to reflect upon the fact that feasts are commonly and quite naturally the occasion of marking rank and precedence. The Lord's rebuke of such as sought the "chief place at feasts" was the more likely to be preserved in the tradition and recorded in the Gospels because it had a pungent application to contemporary Christian practice.<sup>4</sup> At all events, it proves the custom, which was in fact well nigh universal, of marking distinctions of rank by the place assigned at table. We have to suppose that the elders would occupy the chief places on either side of the president at the head of the Eucharistic table.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Love of the "chief place at feasts" (*πρωτοκλισία*) is rebuked in Luke 14 : 7, 8 ; 20 : 46 ; Matt. 23 : 6 ; Mark 12 : 39. The last three passages speak likewise of coveting the "chief seats in the synagogues" (*πρωτοκαθεδρία*). We know nothing about the seating in Christian assemblies for instruction during the first century. James 2 : 2, 3, in which the Christian house of worship is called a "synagogue," seems to imply a president of the assembly ; but otherwise it witnesses rather against than for a custom of seating according to *ecclesiastical* rank. Early in the second century, as we learn from Hermas, ambition after official rank was still expressed as a desire for the chief seats at the Eucharistic table — that is, the presbyters' seats on either side of the bishop and behind the holy table.

<sup>5</sup> In considering the development of the offices of bishop, deacon, and presbyter I ignore for the moment the disturbing effect which the possible

Vague as this distinction was at first, it was probably the most formal that they enjoyed. We shall see now how this distinction became more marked with the development of the Eucharistic ritual.

There was one crisis in the development of the Eucharistic celebration which was fraught with the weightiest significance for future institutions. The change therein accomplished was a double one: it consisted in the first place in the separation of the Eucharist from the agape; and in the second place in its union with the general service of instruction and wor-

presence of "gifted teachers" (apostles, evangelists, prophets) might have upon the arrangement of the Eucharistic table. The presence of any of the higher, charismatic officers must have had a profound effect upon the whole situation: it must in fact have inhibited, to a greater or less degree, the development of this secondary and substitutionary organization. The bishop was nothing more than a substitute for the charismatic teacher, and it is impossible to imagine what part he could have played so long as an apostle or evangelist was resident in the community. With the coming of such a personage the bishop must have fallen back temporarily into the rank of the presbyters. Where charismatic gifts were more common, we might expect that the episcopal organization — I speak now of the plural episcopate — would be later developed or be developed with less definiteness. This accords with the fact, as I take it to be, that this organization was not everywhere developed at the same time. It accords as well with the fact that plural episcopacy was ultimately established in all parts of the Church, attaining its logical development in the form of monepiscopacy. This whole development was accomplished without controversy, so far as we know. As the higher charismatic ministry every where vanished from the scene, the bishops every where took their place — as they had done from the beginning in the many places where gifted teachers were rarely to be had. Apostles and evangelists vanished first, prophets and teachers lingered later. As episcopacy became fixed and traditional it tended to resist encroachment upon its prerogatives. Prophets and teachers might enter this new system only by being assimilated to it — that, is by becoming bishops. This, we have reason to believe, was not uncommon about the turn of the second century. On the other hand the intrusion of the evangelist or "apostle" was rendered impossible by the rule which we find in the *Didache* forbidding him to remain in any settled congregation for more than one day, or two at the longest.



ship. There is every reason to believe that these two changes were simultaneous, for each seems to be in a measure dependent upon the other. The effect of the change was momentous, as well for organization as for the liturgy and for church architecture. But before considering particularly the character of the change and its effects, we may inquire into its causes, which in the main are so simple that they need not detain us long.

The Church could not but be conscious of the inconvenience of assembling twice upon the same day: at one time and place for the service of instruction; and again, and perhaps at different places, for the Eucharist. Yet these two assemblies could hardly be united so long as the Eucharist was associated with a hearty meal: if they were held at the same place, the room which would hold the assembly as it was gathered for instruction might not accommodate the same number at table; if held at the same time, the paraphernalia of the agape would be distracting to the service of worship. Another consideration was still more serious. Association with the agape definitely limited the number of persons that could convene in one place for the celebration of the Eucharist; so that with the numerical growth of the Church it became more and more impossible to make this feast what it aspired to be, the symbol of the unity of the whole local brotherhood. The principal assembly for instruction might actually comprise the greater part of the congregation, while the Eucharist must be celebrated by smaller groups scattered among several houses. This situation may have long endured, and it may perhaps explain the plurality of bishops. But with the rapid expansion of the Church the situation became ever more intolerable. The Eucharist itself prompted a strong trend towards the *expression* of unity.

Many other considerations may have conduced to the same end, but what has been said suffices to explain the *fact* that the Eucharist was ultimately freed from the restrictions of the agape and united with the service of instruction, constituting with it one principal assembly, at which upon every Lord's day all Christians from the town and the surrounding country were expected to be present. A logical corollary of this development, if not an immediate consequent, was the single episcopate.

When this change came about it is not possible to fix with precision. We learn from Justin Martyr that the new order was every where completely developed before the middle of the second century. I may say at once that I am disposed to attribute the origin of this change to the very earliest years of that century. Many general considerations favor this, and there is no concrete fact to oppose it.<sup>6</sup> But it is not necessary — indeed it

<sup>6</sup> Great difference of opinion exists about the date of the *Didache*. On general grounds I am disposed to attribute this work (in which the Eucharist seems still to be associated with the agape) to the last years of the first century. Pliny's letter to Trajan (about A. D. 110) is by many supposed to indicate the change referred to in the text. Pliny says that the Christians in Bithynia were accustomed to assemble a second time every Sunday to partake of a "harmless meal," which practice they discontinued agreeably to his injunction. If we may assume that the Eucharist then formed part of this meal, we may infer that it was at that time separated from the agape and celebrated at the early morning assembly in such purely symbolical fashion as would not arouse the suspicion which the Roman government entertained of club banquets. If this be so we must recognize another motive which may very well have operated occasionally to reinforce those we have already considered. The Christians of Bithynia would certainly be the more ready to comply with the demand of the governor, if the change to which they were forced had already been made in other and more important Churches. In general, it must have been the smaller Churches that adhered longest to the old custom, because their numbers had not grown too great for all to meet at a common agape. Under such conditions, however, the change was apt to be less radical and momentous for the smaller Churches than for the greater. For it is not unlikely that the smaller

is far from plausible — to suppose that the change occurred everywhere at the same time; nor need we imagine that where the change was once made it entirely excluded the older custom. Practical convenience was the motive of the change, and consequently there was no dogmatic interest in exacting rigorous compliance with the new custom — which, moreover, was at first the custom of the principal assembly alone. Long after the new custom was established it seems to have been common for smaller groups to celebrate the Eucharist or agape<sup>7</sup> seated about a common table. There are

communities knew from first to last but one Eucharistic assembly, and consequently but one bishop; whereas in the great cities the development of the monepiscopal régime was retarded by the existing organization. One needs hardly to be reminded that the position of the early Catholic bishop, in all but the great cities, was that of a parochial pastor, presiding over a single congregation.

<sup>7</sup> See Lightfoot, *Ignatius*, vol. II. p. 312, note 2. Lightfoot supposes (chiefly on the ground of *Smyrn.* c. 8), that the separation of the Eucharist from the agape had not taken place at the time Ignatius wrote. I too interpret the word agape in this text as denoting a Eucharistic celebration; but I suppose that the more formal and solemn Eucharist was by this time celebrated in connection with the morning service of instruction, while beside it, in smaller circles, the Eucharistic agape (an evening meal) still survived as a memorial of the original form of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 9:17 sqq.). But we must beware not to speak of the Eucharist as though it were a separable constituent readily distinguished from the agape. It is unhistorical to import this discrimination into the early age. The agape *was* the Eucharist. St. Paul's denunciation of the disorders at Corinth reveals, not a disorderly supper preceding the Eucharist, but a drunken and gluttonous Eucharist. The agape and the Lord's Supper alike denoted a common meal, in which, among other articles of food, the bread and wine that were consumed were received as the body and blood of the Lord. *Along side of* the general morning celebration on the Lord's Day, the primitive supper was long maintained. In North Africa at least it was observed as late as the middle of the third century — apparently among the clergy alone. The agape as we know it at the end of the third century was completely divested of its higher religious associations: it soon suffered from abuse, and before long fell into disuse. This late agape, a purely secular residuum of the Lord's Supper, must not be confounded with the agape of the earlier age.

crypts of the second century in the Roman catacombs which seem to be designed for the celebration of the Eucharist in small companies at a common table, and there is one important fresco at least which supports this testimony.<sup>8</sup> It would not be strange if the primitive fashion of celebrating the Eucharist long survived in the family groups which assembled in their sepulchral chambers to hold service in memorial of their dead.

The character of the change we are here considering is best seen in its effects upon the order or ritual of worship, and through this its consequences for Church organization will become clear.<sup>9</sup> The Christian service of instruction must have lost much of its enthusiastic character before the time came when it was united with the Eucharist, for the development which preceded this change assumes the gradual disappearance of the charismatic ministry. Union with the Eucharistic assembly must have added a new element of formality. What had originally been a free assembly with little or no superintendence, received through this union a formally constituted president in the person of the bishop. This of itself must have tended to insure an orderly service. On the side of government its consequences were important, for presidency in the principal assembly on the Lord's day implied presidency in all assemblies of the Church — assemblies for election and ordination, for discipline, and for all the emergencies of government. The position of

<sup>8</sup> See particularly Wilpert, *Fractio Panis*, passim.

<sup>9</sup> It is to be noted, by the way, that what was most radical in this change was the *separation* of the Eucharist from the agape, not its union with the service of instruction and worship, which must occasionally have taken place from the earliest times, as, for example, upon the occasion of St. Paul's visit to Troas (Acts 20 : 6-11). Both elements of the change, however, were about equally effective in the gradual perversion of the idea and use of the sacrament.



the bishop was the more exalted because he presided at the head of the body of presbyters, and was separated as it were by this whole moral distance from the congregation, while the deacons — themselves men of consideration — appeared in the assembly as his ministers.

In the Eucharistic assembly at all events the bishop was more than a mere presiding officer: he was the chief liturge of the congregation. Who but the bishop could offer the prayers of the congregation to God? The Eucharistic prayer, which it had ever been his function to offer, was becoming more and more elaborate, and gradually came to be regarded not only as the principal prayer of the Church, but as the most inclusive. As we find it in the earliest liturgies it had become a very long prayer, interspersed with popular psalmody, and containing various elements of petition and commemoration, besides the thanksgiving for all of God's mercies of providence and of grace displayed under the Old Dispensation and under the New.

But it must be remembered too that *all* prayers offered in this assembly acquired at once a relation to the Eucharist, for the whole service was conducted at the Lord's table (the altar, as it was afterwards called), and the earlier part of the service was regarded as preparatory to the latter. We can readily imagine how each part reacted upon the other to favor the development of a Christian cultus in the strictest sense, — a development which was furthered by many other motives which are more commonly recognized. Yet even in the liturgies of the fourth century and later we can plainly enough distinguish the two constituent elements which were so closely assimilated in this service. The two great divisions are marked by

the dismissal of the catechumens, who might not remain for the Eucharistic service proper, at which, as formerly at the agape, only baptized persons were present, who were all expected to communicate. The first part consisted of several Scripture lections, interspersed with psalms and hymns, and followed by the sermon; concluding with a long general prayer, which Justin Martyr mentions in a way that suggests the deacon's bidding prayer which we find in the earliest liturgies.<sup>10</sup> In this form of prayer the deacon announced to the people one subject of petition after another, and the direct prayer was made by all in common, though in silence. This represented the popular participation in prayer which had been enjoyed in the assembly for instruction. In the second century the bishop was ordinarily the only one who might offer a prayer directly addressed to God in the name of the whole congregation, — assuming that no gifted teacher was present.

The form of the Christian house of worship and the arrangement of the officers and congregation therein has an important bearing both upon the liturgy and upon Church government. We have to suppose that until about the third century Church assemblies were ordinarily held in the private houses of well-to-do disciples. Ultimately, such houses may have been appropriated to the exclusive use of the Church, and when new or larger houses of worship were required they were probably built upon a similar plan. This whole development lies in the dark, but it is now the

<sup>10</sup> See Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst*, 1854, pp. 247 sqq. In describing the development of the liturgy with sole reference to its influence upon Church organization, it is altogether out of the question to furnish proof of the positions I here assume — even when they may seem novel. This, however, I hope to do before long in a work devoted expressly to the subject.

general opinion that the well-known type of Church building which emerged in the time of Constantine (the so-called basilica) was derived from the peristyle of the better class of Greek dwelling, or — what comes to the same thing — the peristyle-atrium of the Roman house.<sup>11</sup> It cannot be accounted strange if the Eucharistic ritual, which first adapted itself to the disposition of the private house, should tend to perpetuate the form of building which was inextricably associated with its development. The nave, which was the room of the congregation, does not concern us here: the colonnades which divided it into aisles separated several classes of worshippers, but marked no distinctions of rank; and the space separated for the choir in the middle probably reflects the practice of a later age. We are here solely concerned with the room that was occupied by the higher clergy, — bishop, presbyters, and deacons. This was a relatively small extension of the middle aisle, usually semicircular in plan, raised a few steps above the floor of the nave, and roofed by a half dome — hence called the *apsis*. At the back of the apse was the cathedra of the bishop; and on either side of this, following the curve of the wall, a bench for the presbyters. In front of them (that is, between the clergy and the congregation) was the Holy Table. About this the deacons *stood*, as the original character of their office required.

<sup>11</sup> For the origin of the basilica see my *Monuments of the Early Church*, pp. 91–105. Hauck's art. *Kirchenbau* in *Herzog's Realencyklopädie*, 3rd ed. Bd. X. p. 774, is the most recent treatment of this subject, and it suggests several modifications of the view presented in my book. For the adaptation of the basilica to the requirements of the cultus, see my book above mentioned, pp. 117, 123 sq. On the adaptation of round and cross-shaped buildings to the Eucharist see *ibid.* pp. 150 sq., 154 sq.; for the altar, pp. 159 sqq.; for the cathedra, pp. 172 sqq.

The centre of this whole system is the Holy Table. Without it the arrangement would be accidental and inorganic. In this the ritual found its centre, and even the architectural lines of the building were ordered with predominant reference to it. This arrangement which we find in the earliest basilicas of the fourth century, we have good reason to refer, in its essential features, to the early age in which the Eucharist was first separated from the agape. And even this critical period of transition effected no *essential* change. The Eucharist had ceased to be a veritable meal. But the Table was not discarded. Only — the congregation had outgrown it. The assembly grew to a multitude, while the Table retained its original modest proportions, or even became smaller as the development prompted. It is manifest that all could no longer sit at the table: but some might, and indeed *must*. Who should this be but the bishop, as president, and the elders who had always enjoyed the seats of honor on either side of him? The deacons stood as usual about the Table in the attitude of service, but the people approached it only to communicate.

This is substantially the situation which is reflected in the arrangement of the basilicas of the fourth century, notwithstanding the fact that the presbyters had in the meantime become the ordinary presidents of the Eucharist. The traditional position of the bishop's seat behind the altar remained unchanged until late in the Middle Ages, and the whole development of Church architecture until the most modern times has been dominated by the conception that the congregation and clergy are assembled together at the Lord's Table. The Protestant sects that have dethroned the Eucharist from its high and central place in Christian worship naturally



find the traditional form of church unsuitable, and there remains nothing but custom to restrain them from erecting buildings which are more expressly adapted for use as a meeting-house or auditorium. Such buildings we should undoubtedly have had in the early age, if the Eucharist had not been united with the assembly for instruction: — instead of the baptistery and the basilica, we should have had every where a baptistery, an auditorium, and a *triclinium*.

Enough has been said to show what important consequences for the development of architecture and of the liturgy lay implicit in the union of the Eucharist with the assembly for instruction, which I assume to have occurred about the beginning of the second century. It is now possible to appreciate the influence of this factor upon the development of Church government. Although after this change the clergy retained the same position as of old with relation to the Holy Table, their relation to the people was seriously altered. It can hardly be doubted that the separation which was here involved between the congregation on the one hand and the bishop, presbyters, and deacons on the other, was a potent factor in developing the idea of the *clerus* as a separate class in the community. It must at once have accentuated the notion of rank: while the official status of bishops and deacons was made more distinct and more secure, the vaguer rank of the presbyters could not fail to develop into a formal office.

We must take also into account the gradual development which resulted from the association of the sacrificial idea with the Eucharist, and the treatment of it as an awe-inspiring mystery which must be hedged about with all possible pomp and ceremony. Through this association the clergy themselves were soon invested

with an official sanctity, and the idea of priesthood, which formerly was applied to the Christian teacher as such, particularly the prophet, was in the Catholic development appropriated exclusively to the ministers of the cultus. Though the word priest was used metaphorically at first, it was ultimately taken in its literal significance, denoting a sacrificing minister.

The Eucharist, there can be no doubt, originally implied a sacrifice, for it was a *sacrificial meal*. But the victim was supposed to be already offered, and it was here brought — not to be again offered, but — to be eaten. An early and innocent notion represented all gifts brought by the people at the Eucharist as an offering to God. The whole wealth of Hebrew sacrificial symbolism was employed for the expression of this idea, and though the notion was essentially a metaphorical one, the language in which it was couched may easily be interpreted in the sense of the later Catholic doctrine. The use of such language as this, the common employment of the terms priest, altar, and sacrifice, must have led men gradually to seek a more real connotation; but it is not till the third century (in Cyprian's writings) that we find express reference to the body and blood of Christ as constituting the sacrifice which was offered in the Eucharist. With this, the sacrificial doctrine and the sacrificial ministry were practically complete. But all this represents a later development than that which immediately engages us. The sacrificial idea was a potent factor in defining the character of the ministry, but it came too late to have much influence upon the *form* of organization.

The line of thought which is here traced, gradually developed a new estimation of the clergy, but a *higher* estimation than that which they already enjoyed at the

beginning of the second century it is hardly possible to imagine. By that time the charismatic ministry had become almost a negligible factor, and the bishops who presided in the place of the gifted teachers (apostles, evangelists, prophets, etc.) inherited much of the estimation in which they had been held, — that is, as we have learned in the last chapter, the exalted honor and authority which belongs to the direct representatives of God or Christ. From another point of view, the loftiest claim the bishop could make for his office was supported by the ideal consideration that as president of the Eucharist, he acted in Christ's place and sat in his seat. This idea could have little tendency to enhance the official power of the bishop so long as the dignity of presiding at the Eucharist was simply allotted to the person of most consequence that happened to be present in the assembly; but it could not fail to contribute greatly to the episcopal authority so soon as the bishop's office became more distinctly defined and his rights over the Eucharist became more exclusive.

An immediate and decided advance in this direction must have been made when the people were separated from the Holy Table and the bishop and elders alone sat there. This situation occasioned, as I have said, a more definite notion of the rank of presbyter, and led ultimately to the *election or appointment* of presbyters as to an *office*. Naturally, too, the presbyters profited by the symbolic notion which proved so advantageous to the bishop: if the bishop presided at the Table in Christ's stead, the presbyters, who now alone sat with him, evidently represented the Twelve Apostles. There was here no thought of a *succession* either from the Apostles or from Christ: it was merely the situation of the moment which reproduced the sacramental meal as the

Lord had observed it with the Twelve in the upper-room at Jerusalem. This symbolical consideration probably accounts for the fact that the Alexandrian presbyters were limited to twelve, just as the deacons at Rome were limited to seven in consideration of the Seven who were appointed in the early days at Jerusalem. According to a similar symbolism which prevailed in the remoter parts of Egypt at least as early as the middle of the second century, the presbyters were likened to the four and twenty elders of the Apocalypse who appear on either side of the throne of God.

It is chiefly, however, in the language of St. Ignatius that we find proof of the general currency of these ideas, and of the fact that they transgressed the proper limits of symbolism and were applied with almost literal force. St. Ignatius' claims for the episcopate reach a pitch of extravagance which must appear positively blasphemous except as they are explained by the tradition which we have been considering. "Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even as wherever Jesus Christ is there is the catholic Church" (*Smyrn.* c. 8). "For when ye are obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ . . . be ye obedient also to the presbytery as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope" (*Trall.* c. 2). "Plainly therefore we ought to regard the bishop as the Lord himself" (*Ephes.* c. 6). Ignatius, it is true, deals somewhat freely with this figure, and frequently speaks of the bishop rather as the "type of the Father."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> "In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being the type of the Father and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God and as the band of the Apostles" (*Trall.* c. 3). The deacons are here regarded as serving the bishop as the Son serves the Father — "the bishop presiding after the likeness of God and the presbyters after the likeness of the council of the Apostles, with the deacons also who are most dear to me, having



But at all events the presbytery is invariably compared with the Apostles, and all three orders — the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons — are commonly associated together in a way which plainly reflects the concrete relations towards one another which were defined by the places they occupied at the Eucharistic table. When Ignatius says “with your revered bishop, and with the fitly wreathed spiritual *crown* of your presbytery, and with the deacons who walk after God” (*Magn.* c. 13), he seems to have before his mind’s eye the half-circle of presbyters seated around the throne of the bishop, according to the arrangement which appears first in the basilicas, but which may well date back to the beginning of the second century. This half-circular arrangement of the presbyters’ seats may perhaps explain also the strange figure of speech which Ignatius employs in *Ephes.* c. 4, where he says that the presbytery is “attuned to the bishop as the strings to a lyre.”

The broad currency and enduring influence of this range of ideas, this heavenly comparison which sheds so much lustre upon the Catholic ministry, is proved by the popularity of a theme of Christian art which first manifests itself in the decoration of the basilicas of the fourth century, and probably does not antedate that age. I refer to the subject which was usually employed for the apsidal decoration of the churches. The earliest and noblest example preserved to us is the mosaic in Sta. Pudenziana at Rome, belonging to the end of the fourth century. But besides the records or remains of many other mosaics, we find the same theme reproduced

been intrusted with the diaconate of Jesus Christ (*i. e.* of which he was the type), who was with the Father before the worlds and appeared at the end of time” (*Magn.* c. 6). Cf. *Smyrn.* c. 8.

in the frescoes of the catacombs and upon the sarcophagi, and finally upon metal and ivory objects of every sort on which pictorial art was employed. There is no doubt that this theme was originally developed for the decoration of the apse of the basilica, and here it is that its appropriateness is most manifest. The general theme, occupying both the apse and the apsidal arch, is a representation of the heavenly Jerusalem, depicted chiefly in terms taken from the Apocalypse. I need not describe here the many symbolical motives which entered into this composition, nor even note the principal variations of the theme.<sup>13</sup> All that is strictly in point for our present purpose is the central subject in the form in which it was usually represented. In the center of the apse Christ is represented, enthroned in the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem, and stretching out his hand with the gesture of address as the Teacher of the world. On either side of him are ranged the Twelve Apostles, seated upon a bench precisely like that occupied by the presbyters. Above, it may be noted, upon the apsidal arch, the four and twenty elders are depicted. In the mosaic of Sta. Pudenziana, Mt. Calvary looms in the background, surmounted by the cross, and above it the Paternal hand holds out the crown of eternal recompense. From below the throne, the Spirit, under the symbol of a dove, rains influence upon the Church. When we reflect that immediately below this the bishop was seated upon the cathedra surrounded by his presbytery, and add that he too was accustomed to address the Church from his seat, it is impossible to ignore the analogy between the heavenly and the earthly assembly, or to doubt that the earthly ministry was regarded as

<sup>13</sup> For this I may refer to my *Monuments of the Early Church*, pp. 302 sqq.

the counterpart of Christ and his Apostles. We have only to wonder that this idea persisted so long in spite of new notions of the ministry (the apostolical succession of the bishops) which ran athwart the earlier conceptions. But this is only one out of many illustrations of the fact that popular ideals do not always correspond with polemical and theological dogmas. We may note in passing from this theme, that the Lord's Day assembly in heaven, which St. John had depicted as a sublimated transcript of the familiar service of the Church, had now in turn come to be regarded as the heavenly pattern of earthly worship.

Returning to Ignatius and his age, it must appear more clearly than ever that the heavenly analogy to which he resorts to magnify the importance of the bishop and the presbytery was implied in the very nature of the Eucharistic assembly and was consequently no mere invention of his own. It is certain that he exploits this capital to the utmost, just as he does the symbol of unity which was expressed by the organization of the principal assembly. That this organization, too, was already established in most of the Churches with which Ignatius was acquainted, and was not brought about as a result of his propaganda, it would be preposterous to doubt. As a matter of fact, he makes no propaganda for the establishment of the single episcopate: it is certain that it was already established in all the Churches to which he writes, with the possible exception of the Church at Rome — and in his letter to this Church he makes no reference to the subject whatsoever. It is a monstrously unhistorical assumption that in the age of Ignatius "the presbyters, whose position and power in the community had hitherto seemed supreme, were relegated to the second

rank.”<sup>14</sup> Starting with the assumption of the original identity of bishops and presbyters, the development of the single episcopate is left an insoluble mystery; for, leaving all facts aside, and giving the freest rein to the imagination, it is impossible to propose any plausible process whereby, in the short space of time allowed for the revolution, one of the bishops could have been elevated to a position relative to the rest like that of Christ above his Apostles.

We have seen, however, that the single bishop and the whole organization of which he was the head is explained by the nature of the Eucharistic assembly. This organization was gradually coming to clearer expression and acquiring more definite authority. It was already formally defined in all the *principal* assemblies, of which there was *at least* one in every town, and in the smaller towns probably no more than one. So far as the form is concerned, nothing could be added to this organization; but its authority needed to be strengthened, and it still remained for it to affirm its right as the *exclusive* organization of the local community, as the exclusive authority over the Eucharist.

This is the point of Ignatius' plea, the express object of his whole propaganda. For Ignatius, the single bishop is the correlative of a single Eucharistic assembly, and he avails himself of the unity of organization which actually existed to press the plea for unity of worship. This is his great remedy for schism. He urges this point in all his epistles — except in that to the Romans. In *Ephes.* c. 20 he says: “Assemble yourselves together in common, . . . to the end that

<sup>14</sup> This has been the common assumption: the phrase in the text I take from one of the latest works on the subject, Allen, *Christian Institutions*, 1897, p. 62.



ye may obey the bishop and the presbytery without distraction of mind ; breaking one bread," etc. *Ib.* c. 5 : " If any one be not within the precinct of the altar, he lacketh the bread of God. For if the prayer of one and another hath so great force, how much more that of the bishop and of the whole Church." <sup>15</sup> *Trall.* c. 3 : " Without these [*i. e.* the bishop, the presbytery, and the deacons] there is not even the name of a Church." *Phil.* c. 4 : " Be ye careful therefore to observe one Eucharist (for there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ and one cup unto union in his blood ; there is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the presbytery and the deacons my fellow servants), that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it after God." *Smyrn.* c. 8 : " Shun divisions as the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles ; and to the deacons pay respect as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be ; even as wherever Jesus is, there is the catholic Church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or to hold an agape."

Ignatius starts with the single episcopate as an accomplished fact — or rather with the episcopal organization as a whole, including the presbytery and the deacons. He does not exalt the bishop at the expense of the presbytery, but he strives to raise the *whole* organization to a higher power. As a matter of fact, the single episcopate was already so well established

<sup>15</sup> For strong exhortations to community in worship, see *Magn.* cc. 4, 6, 7, — cf. *Trall.* c. 7.

in Asia Minor that no danger was apprehended of seeing a second bishop set up. But if instead of a bishop, Ignatius had found the presbytery in the position of supreme authority, there is no reason to suppose that he would not have been satisfied with that. The presbytery would have been at least equally safe as a center of unity, though it might not prove so efficient as an executive; and a majority vote of the presbyters would have answered equally well the prime purpose Ignatius had in view of *legally* excluding sectarian manifestations of Christianity. But Ignatius took the organization as he found it—the organization of the Eucharistic assembly, which had already become the one principal assembly of the Church—and the gist of his pretension is, that the president of the principal assembly is *ipso facto* the president of every assembly of the Church. Without the bishop's leave it is not lawful to baptize, nor to hold an agape, or any assembly whatever which deserves the name of a Church. Above all, there must be no Eucharistic assembly without the presence of the bishop or his delegate. For if heretics could celebrate the Eucharist, who could deny them the name of a Church? Ignatius made a momentous addition to Christ's definition of the Church. Christ said that wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of them—and that constitutes the Church. Ignatius adds: when they have the legal organization of bishop, presbytery, and deacons. This is a grave addition indeed.

The point which Ignatius urged was a difficult one to carry through. It had against it not only the evangelical definition of the Church, but the force of ecclesiastical tradition. In part, his purpose was never achieved; and for the rest, it was achieved by means

which he never dreamt of. No sooner was the single Eucharist recognized as an ideal to be striven after, than the numerical growth of the Church rendered its accomplishment forever impossible. The single episcopate subsequently triumphed in all parts of the Church; but in the main it was not strictly the Ignatian episcopate, it no longer represented the presidency over a single Eucharist, the single principal assembly of the whole town, but a presidency by delegation over many equal assemblies. A corollary of the Catholic episcopate as it was finally established, and an indispensable condition of its triumph, was the admission of the presbyters to a function which had hitherto constituted the chief characteristic of the bishop's office, making the presbyters the *ordinary* presidents of the Eucharist. It is this revolution — if anything in the gradual development of Church organization may be called revolutionary — which gave the presbyters the distinctive position they have ever since enjoyed, and necessitated the invention of new theories, unknown to Ignatius, to explain and justify the singularity of the episcopal office. This change was accomplished in an age about which we have only the scantiest historical information, and the finality of the new order is so impressive as it emerges into the clear light of history that it has ever since obscured our insight into the earlier development. Into this dark problem I propose now to enter, giving in brief terms a theory of the development which seems to accord with the few facts we know about the organization of the Church in that critical period, and which serves in part to bridge over the gap which we recognize between the primitive episcopal organization and the Catholic episcopate of the middle of the second century.

But first we must turn back again to consider more

in detail the character of the episcopate at the very beginning of the second century, and note more exactly the problem to which the appeal of Ignatius was immediately addressed. I have not yet sufficiently discussed the origin of the single episcopate as it is revealed in the Ignatian epistles. I confess that in regard to this matter we are left largely to conjecture. I suppose that in very many towns there was never more than one bishop, because the community did not outgrow the limitations of a single Eucharistic agape until it was able to take advantage of the custom of holding an enlarged Eucharistic assembly without the agape, and so to preserve continuously the unity of organization and worship. In other cases where there was originally a plurality of bishops — this may have characterized the majority of cases, or it may have been the invariable case, at any rate in all such cases — I rely upon the centralizing influence of the *principal assembly* on which I have all along laid so much stress. I do not pretend that this was a definite institution, or had any such definite name as I have given it; but something of the sort there must every where have been, as a concrete expression of the sense of local unity of which we have so many proofs. How significant is the mere fact that from first to last we never find such a phrase as “the *Churches* of Corinth,” for example, but only “the Church at Corinth” — in spite of the fact that there were ordinarily several assemblies. This fact appears more striking when we reflect that we are nowadays more likely to think and speak of the Episcopal Churches in New York, let us say, than of the Church in its totality as represented in the episcopal organization.

Under the influence of this centralizing motive, and with this concrete center of worship provided, we can



readily imagine that the several bishops might be *gradually* eliminated in favor of one, after the enlarged Eucharistic assembly had made unity in worship possible. Such change was possible because the bishops were *not yet* accounted *legally constituted* officers. It must be remembered, too, that there was no prejudice in the early Church *against* the principle of government by a single officer; nor was it necessary to overcome any prejudice *in favor* of democratic principles, or republican; — there was no notion entertained of any principles of legal government whatsoever, but only of a charismatic government (God's government), which was indeed more consonant with the monarchical form than with any other.

Taking the single episcopate as we find it in the epistles of Ignatius, without probing longer into the causes and processes of its origin, it does not appear that the chief point of Ignatius' propaganda was either easy of execution or logically justified by the preceding development. Even where the single bishop was *de facto* the sole local authority over the Eucharist, he was not regarded as possessing such authority *de jure*. The high comparison that is employed to exalt the dignity of the bishop and the presbytery does not go one step toward justifying an exclusive authority over the Eucharist. For however eminent the bishop might be within his own assembly, he possessed no authority in any other assembly — still less the authority to prohibit another assembly. Every other assembly was equally a manifestation of the Ecclesia. The tradition sanctioned other Eucharistic assemblies apart from the principal one, and there was probably never a time when a practical reason — not to say necessity — for holding such was altogether lacking. Though only a few might

meet in such an assembly, it none the less constituted an Ecclesia, and he who presided could not but be regarded, like the bishop, as the representative of Christ.

Nevertheless, I think we may probably presume that in such Churches as we are here considering Ignatius' point was soon carried — not so much by the force of his arguments,<sup>16</sup> or even by the warmth of his appeal, as by reason of the practical dangers his admonition was intended to meet. The Gnostic sects of that age seem not to have been in a position to set up an opposition organization of any strength, or to win over at one time any considerable community. The Church suffered loss principally through leakage, — minor assemblies of small size were liable to capture. Hence such occasions of danger must be eliminated — and doubtless they were.

But if the purity of the faith was thereby maintained, it was at a great cost — the cost of subjecting the Church to a legal organization. The ideal Ignatius had in view was a definite congregational system. The congregational idea had grown up gradually in connection with the principal assembly; but during the whole of the first century, as Sohm remarks, we find only the pre-

<sup>16</sup> We must be on our guard not to import into the sphere of ideas which determined the early conceptions of Church government the post-Augustinian doctrine of the *grace of orders* which has been so important a factor in all modern controversies about the character and authority of the ministry. Ignatius had no notion of a clerical "character" impressed upon the bishop (or presbyter) in virtue of which he had the power to do what no other could do. Neither had he any notion of a definite change in the Eucharistic elements such as would require a particular sort of priestly endowment. He looks at the question purely from the legal point of view. Hence he recognizes that any one may be delegated by the bishop to preside at the Eucharist. That only is a valid Eucharist which is presided over by the bishop or his delegate, because that alone is "according to the commandment."

liminary stages of congregational construction, not congregationalism itself. So long as other assemblies were freely allowed, and the principal assembly did not claim to be the only assembly deserving the name of a Church; the Ecclesia might be hampered by law, but was not yet bound by it, and even the recognition of a legal right on the part of the bishop in his own assembly did not have the effect of legalizing Christendom. This end was definitely accomplished when the Ignatian thesis was accepted. This was very far from effecting the legal *organization* of the whole empirical multitude of Christians throughout the world, for the Ignatian system was essentially congregational independency, though in the cases with which he was most familiar the congregation was conterminous with the local community. It was more than a century before a broader organization was achieved. But none the less, the immediate effect of the Ignatian thesis was to *legalize* the whole Church, for it spread a mesh from which no assembly could escape.

It is now time to observe that the Ignatian scheme was expressly formulated for such communities as already had a single bishop and a single principal assembly, and was not at all adapted to bring about a similar consummation in cities where several bishops existed and where the Church had perhaps outgrown the possibility of a single assembly. Several bishops implied, as I suppose, as many principal assemblies — if we may so call them — each with its appropriate organization of presbytery and deacons. Ignatius' idea of the Church assembly was still too much like the primitive one to afford any argument against this system, or to suggest any higher principle of unity under which these several organizations could be combined. Ignatius would not

accept the primitive maxim, that wherever the disciples are assembled, there is the Church, a complete manifestation of Christendom : yet he was the ardent champion of the principle, that wherever there is an assembly with the proper organization of bishop, presbytery, and deacons, there is the *whole* Church. For what can be more whole and entire than an assembly in which Christ himself is represented by the bishop, and the company of the Apostles by the presbytery ? If, as I presume, there was a plurality of bishops at Rome at the time of his writing, Ignatius could have had no ground of complaint against it — and, in fact, his letter breathes not the slightest reproach on this score against a Church which he adulates above all others.

Ritschl believed that a peculiar conception of the episcopate was indicated by the organization of the Churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria.<sup>17</sup> The presidency of the Church at Jerusalem was accorded to James as the Lord's brother ; and Symeon, who succeeded him in this dignity, was likewise a blood-relation of the Lord.<sup>18</sup> St. James, therefore, who presided among the Apostles, was not accounted a successor of the Apostles, as according to the Catholic theory of the episcopate (which Ritschl identifies with that of Ignatius), but as the *successor of the Lord*. The same notion is reflected in the subsequent choice of Symeon, the cousin of the Lord ; and, as Ritschl thinks, in the organization of the Alexandrian Church, in which the twelve presbyters mentioned by Eutychius may be supposed to represent the Apostles, and the bishop must therefore be the representative of the Lord. This, according to Ritschl, constitutes a Jewish-Christian type of the epis-

<sup>17</sup> Ritschl, *Entstehung*, 2nd ed., pp. 415–419, 433–436.

<sup>18</sup> Hegisippus in Euseb. *H. E.* IV. 22, 23.



copate, an episcopate which was not an office of a local congregation, but aspired to universal presidency over the Church—for obviously the Lord's representative and successor could be no less than the universal bishop of Christendom. The notion is, that the early disciples accepted St. James as the visible head of the Kingdom of God upon earth, just as the Mahometans followed the successor of the Prophet.

But in reality, when we take into account the primitive idea of the Church and the organization of the Eucharistic assembly, all the information we have about the Churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria accords perfectly with the Ignatian ideal of the episcopate. It is a matter of indifference whether St. James was ever known by the title of bishop or not:—the probability is that he was not, but he was certainly the ordinary president of the Eucharist in the Jerusalem Church, and as such he must have been regarded as the Lord's representative. It is true that St. James was not merely the chief pastor of a local congregation, for every assembly of Christendom represents the whole Church, and its decisions are valid for all. Such decisions, however, can be legally enforced upon none; for every other assembly is equally a manifestation of Christendom, and its president is the representative of Christ. Just so with the Ignatian episcopate. The bishop was never a mere congregational officer, although it was about his office, as the only settled office in the local community, that the congregational idea was developed. He was always a Church officer—as Christ's representative he could be no less—and had duties with respect to the whole Church. But in all this there was no claim of exclusive authority, there was no rivalry between bishops, between this representative of Christ and the other, no aspiration

after an episcopate which might claim the rule over the whole empirical multitude of Christians. Hence, on the one hand, the independence of the bishops; and on the other, their sense of ecumenical responsibility. This latter idea, which was so great a factor in the subsequent Catholic development, was inherent in the office of bishop as such, — indeed, in the nature of the Christian assembly as such. The first idea of office in the Church was that of charismatic office, which was of course an office of the Church at large, and there is no good reason to suppose that the bishop's office was interpreted differently — that is, as a mere congregational office.

We may now turn to consider the more stubborn difficulty of effecting unity of organization in the cities where a plurality of bishops still existed at the beginning of the second century — and where the size of the town and the multitude of the disciples made the single assembly an impossibility. Here for the first time we contemplate what may with some propriety be called a *monarchical* episcopate. The Ignatian bishop whose rule was coextensive with the single Eucharistic assembly no more deserves the title of monarch than does the Presbyterian pastor. This type of parochial episcopacy still persisted, though with important modifications, and persists to-day, in certain countries where Christianity was early established. But the conditions of the larger cities required a new type of bishop, who was no longer a parochial officer, but, as we would say, a diocesan officer, ruling over several quasi-independent congregations, each of which was provided with its own pastors. This became the normal type of the Catholic episcopate, and in all countries which were converted to Christianity after this development was complete — that is,

in North Italy, Spain, Northern Gaul, Britain, and Germany—the episcopal sees embraced whole counties, provinces, or even principalities and kingdoms. We have now to inquire how this development came about, and what changes it wrought in the character of Church organization.

For the purpose of the short sketch I propose to give here, it will be convenient to take a concrete instance by way of example, and none is so apt as the case of Rome. It is the prevalent opinion that the single episcopate was not yet established at Rome when Clement, in behalf of the Roman Church, wrote his epistle to the Corinthians, nor even when Ignatius addressed his epistle to the Romans. We have seen that the Ignatian theory affords no argument which could serve to break down the existing order and establish a single episcopate in cities where there are, and of necessity must be, several principal assemblies. The testimony of the catacombs, although it hardly permits us to form a numerical estimate of the Roman Church at any time, securely proves that in the first decades of the second century it was already too large to meet in a single assembly, even under more liberal conditions of association than the State ever allowed; and it is evident moreover that the great size of the town must ordinarily have hindered the disciples from gathering at one place. It is commonly agreed among those who have a right to an opinion on the subject that even at this period the disciples at Rome had numerous places of assembly. It is an opinion, indeed, which has more truth than evidence on its side; but it seems so manifest a deduction from the given conditions that I doubt if any one could be found to support the view that there was but one assembly of the Roman Church. But this

implies, according to the primitive scheme of organization, that there were as many bishops, presbyteries, and deacons as there were regular assemblies in the city. This assumption agrees well with all that we know securely about the Roman Church at the beginning of the second century.

We have to assume again — and this assumption too we can securely make — that a stringent necessity was felt for a more centralized organization. The pressure of heresy became more serious than even the Ignatian Epistles reveal it; even organized congregations were liable to be invaded; and the need was recognized of opposing a united front to its progress. Especially was it necessary for the *greatest Churches* of Christendom to stand out clearly as leaders of the rest with a ready and unambiguous testimony to the traditional faith. The problem was to discover a center of unity to which appeal could be made for an authoritative definition of the faith of the Roman Church. The question at once arises, Why might not the presbytery have constituted such a center of unity? Simply because there were several presbyteries, and they were not accustomed to act together. A college of bishops was equally out of the question, for the bishop was essentially an independent officer, and the notion of a college of bishops did not yet exist. What did exist, however, was a very clear notion of centralized organization under a single bishop as it was already exemplified in almost all of the small towns and in many of the great ones. That this was the only possible solution we cannot affirm, but it is certain that it was the solution actually resorted to. The great practical obstacle in the way of such a change was the difficulty of eliminating the several bishops already in the field. There was also



a grave theoretical obstacle in the fact that the bishop was essentially the president of the Eucharist — conversely, that *every* regular president of a Eucharistic assembly (of a principal assembly at least) was a bishop. A practical obstacle such as this could never have been surmounted except in the face of an imminent danger and under the stress of a necessity which all recognized as imperative. I do not pretend to explain *how* the extra bishops were got rid of; but whatever the process may have been, the accomplishment could have been hardly more difficult than the subsequent absorption of the country bishops in the presbytery, and their deposition to a rank lower than that of the city presbyters. It must also be taken into account that the dogma that there can be but one bishop in a city was not established until the middle of the third century, as a result of the Novatianist schism.

The theoretical difficulty was met by a new theory of the episcopate; namely, the theory of apostolic succession. Here we reach a point where we have explicit information and are no longer left to our own conjectures and assumptions. It is true that the earliest information we have about the doctrine of apostolic succession comes to us from the end of the second century (Irenaeus), but there is no doubt that this theory essentially conditioned the development, and was not merely a belated attempt to rationalize it. Fortunate it is that we have reliable information here, for who could guess that the bishop had attained a higher authority as representative of the Apostles than he had enjoyed as the representative of Christ? At first sight the new theory seems like a derogation of the previous claim in behalf of the bishop. But in reality it is not; for if the new theory was ideally

less lofty than the old, it was more *concrete*, and it furnished, as the other did not, a justification of the exclusive authority of the bishop in his own town. It provided, moreover, a point of view which served later to justify the preëminence of certain bishops over the rest; that is to say, the hegemony which the greater Churches of Christendom, especially those which boasted an apostolic foundation, claimed over the others, — leading finally to the formal development of metropolitan and patriarchal authority. And lastly, it gave the bishop a status which was independent of his function as president of the Eucharist, constituting him, as it did, the supreme and formally authorized *teacher*.

The earliest notion of apostolic succession which we encounter in Christian literature, viz. in the 1st Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, cc. 42, 44, has little or nothing to do with the later doctrine which we know under this name. It simply guaranteed the legal right, as we may perhaps call it, of bishops *and deacons* to the privileges of their office, on the ground of the *orderly appointment* they had received according to the system initiated by the apostles. This notion involved no implication whatever of the preëminent authority of a single bishop in each town. The doctrine which influenced the development of the second century bore especially upon this question of the single bishop, and it may properly be called the doctrine of apostolic succession, although it must be discriminated from certain radically novel elements which were introduced by Cyprian in the third century, as well as from others which entered into the conception as it was finally formulated in the Middle Ages.

The early doctrine of apostolic succession involved no notion of a mystical infusion of apostolic character

or capacity. It was, on the contrary, wholly a common-sense doctrine, founded upon a concrete assumption, and advancing to a perfectly pragmatic inference. The assumption was that certain individual apostles were the original founders, or for some time the chief pastors, of this and the other of the principal Churches of Christendom; and that the *single* authority over the local Church which was represented in the person of such an apostle was perpetuated in the person of a *single* successor. This is essentially an imaginative construction of history; and yet, the first part of the assumption was manifestly true of several Churches, and even the latter part it would be hard to impeach in the case of some few, — Jerusalem is certainly an instance in point, and so perhaps is Alexandria. The inference — or perhaps we had better call it an additional assumption — was, that the single successor of the apostolic founder inherited his authority (now regarded as a legal authority), and with it a store of apostolic tradition. The single bishop (particularly in such sees as claimed an apostolic origin) was thus regarded as the *repository of apostolic tradition*. The bishop as such was not regarded as the inheritor of the apostolic charisma, but of a store of tradition which he had received in a perfectly natural way like a scholar from his master. Since the bishop's authority did not rest upon the possession of a charismatic endowment it was regarded as a legal authority — and yet not merely so, for it was supposed to rest upon a real possession, not indeed upon an inherent teaching faculty, yet none the less upon a teaching *equipment*. The possession of apostolic tradition was the bishop's supreme title to authority, not only in the local Church, but in the Church at large; for as the reputed possessor of God's word (however he

came by it) his authority was as much an ecumenical authority as was that of the charismatic teacher, whether prophet or apostle.

This theory of the apostolic succession was a powerful and plausible one so long as the unwritten tradition was still a lively factor in Church teaching; but its force was weakened with every generation, and we can readily understand the necessity which subsequently led to the radical modification of the earlier view — a modification or transformation which consisted principally in substituting for the historical assumption a mystical theory of an episcopal *charisma veritatis* which inhered in all bishops alike, a theory of an abstract episcopate which was regarded as the representative of the apostolic primacy of Peter, and which all bishops shared *in solidum*. The early theory, however, was the more effective one so long as there were still bishops who might claim to be disciples of the Apostles in the first or second remove. At all events, this is the only theory ever broached which could have had the effect of reducing the plural episcopate, which was common in the West at the beginning of the second century, to the type of the monarchical episcopate, which was everywhere triumphant by the middle of that century. But we are now upon ground that is familiar to all who have studied the Catholic episcopate, and without inquiring further into the causes of the development, I will notice briefly the immediate effects of it upon Church organization.

The development of the monarchical episcopate affected even more radically the status of the presbyter than that of the bishop. For the presbyters, whose functions had hitherto been vague, who had but lately acquired fixed official rank, and who even with that



were still obliged to act *as a body*,—that is, as a presbytery, and not individually,—were henceforth to be independent parochial pastors and the ordinary presidents of the Eucharist.

Supposing that the extra bishops were successfully eliminated as the theory required, the question remained, who should preside in the assemblies which *ex hypothesi* could not be combined into one under a single bishop. The answer was not doubtful: the presbyters, who alone sat with the bishop at the Lord's table, were the only possible substitutes for the bishop at the Eucharist, and presidency at the Eucharist carried all else with it. It is plausible to suppose that the elders or presbyters had always served as the readiest and most natural substitutes for the bishop at the Eucharist in case of his absence or indisposition; and in towns where the single episcopate had long been traditionally established, the growth of the community may have compelled the bishop to recognize the presbyters as his ordinary delegates in the presidency of separate assemblies which could not join in the bishop's Eucharist. In any case, the way was certainly not utterly unprepared for the crisis which devolved upon the presbyters the still more independent functions of parochial pastors in such cities as had previously required a plurality of bishops. For a long while, however, they seem not to have acted singly in the capacity of pastors, for as late at least as the third century the rule required that there be two presbyters in every Church.

In sharing his rights as president of the Eucharist the bishop relinquished his most distinctive and exclusive function. But it is interesting to note the various efforts which were made to maintain some semblance or vestige of the ancient order of things.

For instance, the Roman *Liber Pontificalis* refers to Melchiades (A.D. 311) the custom of sending particles of the consecrated elements from the bishop's Eucharist to all the titles (parochial churches) of the city, without which the presbyters might not celebrate the sacrament. This was a mere symbol of the bishop's rights as president of all Eucharistic assemblies within his see. But the same rights were more concretely exhibited in the fact that the bishop was actually the president in whatever assembly he chanced to be; and there is reason to suppose that where there were a number of principal assemblies within his diocese, each with its appropriate house of worship, the bishop was accustomed to preside now in one and now in another. It is a striking fact that the ancient basilicas of Rome, beginning with those of the fourth century, are all of them cathedral churches. The bishop's cathedra is established in all of them between the seats of the presbyters, and the presbyters who presided there in the bishop's absence must have done so expressly as his delegates, as do the cardinal presbyters to-day in their titular basilicas.

The reader is likely to be surprised at the many grave assertions which are here set forth with little or no proof. So I must hasten to note that the proof is intentionally deferred in order that the general view, which is so liable to be lost in the study of detail, may once for all be clearly fixed in the mind. This section is a mere sketch of the development of the episcopate, and the remainder of this first volume and a considerable part of the second must be occupied with the detailed study of the problems which are here suggested. But I trust that the theory I here propose will prove

convincing on the mere strength of its inherent reasonableness and coherency. Documentary proofs, so far as such exist, will be forthcoming in the course of the following sections; and I dare to hope that all objections which may already have occurred to the reader will there find an answer.

For the present we must leave the problems of the Catholic episcopate and return to the organization of the primitive age, where we have to trace the preliminary stages of the development.

## § 20, CHURCH PROPERTY

Undoubtedly, one of the factors which contributed most to the development of the congregational idea, the congregational organization as a whole, and the bishop's office in particular, was the possession and administration of Church property. Yet the importance of this factor may easily be exaggerated. Hatch, for instance, has unduly exploited it in proof of his contention that the bishop was originally hardly more than an economic officer, who by reason of the power which he exercised as steward of the Church property was able gradually to gain control over all other functions of Church government and worship. Apart altogether from this extravagant theory, it is commonly assumed that the possession and administration of Church property implies of necessity the legal organization of the Church, or at least of the congregation. It is therefore highly important to inquire what was the nature of Church property, by whom it might be received and administered, for what purposes disbursed, and under what points of view it was regarded. Sohm's investigation has put the whole subject in a new light, and all

that I have to say in this section is taken substantially from his work.<sup>1</sup>

Presidency at the Eucharist implied the reception and administration of the offerings which were there presented for the furnishing of the feast and for distribution to the poor, and it is these offerings which constituted the main source of Church property.<sup>2</sup> He who

<sup>1</sup> Sohm, § 8, pp. 69–81.

<sup>2</sup> The Lord's Supper included the agape, and this double feast was furnished by the free-will offerings which each member brought with him to the assembly. Cf. 1 Cor. 11 : 21, 22 ; and later notices by Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Cyprian, etc. ; and the discussion by Th. Harnack, *Gemeindegottesdienst*, pp. 254, 288, 391, 478. But other gifts used also to be brought to the Eucharistic feast which were not to be consumed at the agape, — cf. the account given by Justin Martyr in *Apol.* I. 67 (quoted below in note 3). In particular, this was taken as the occasion for the offering of the first-fruits, an obligation which was exacted of the disciples under the influence of the O. T. regulation. Cf. Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* (about A. D. 180) IV. 31 : 3, *Oportet enim nos oblationem deo facere . . . primitias earum, quae sunt ejus, creaturarum offerentes. Et hanc oblationem ecclesia sola puram offert fabricatori, offerens ei cum gratiarum actione ex creatura ejus.* It was later specified (*Apost. Canons*, cc. 3, 4) that only the first-fruits of corn, grapes, oil and incense might be brought to the altar. Since the third century at least, the mite-chests that were placed in the churches might also be used for the offerings, — Cyprian, *de opere et elem.* c. 15; *Apost. Const.* II. c. 36. In early times the gifts were made generally in kind. By Cyprian they are called sportulae, and are compared with the tithes of the Old Testament (*Ep.* 1 : 1, *tamquam decimas*), — O. Ritschl, *Cyprian*, pp. 206, 207. There was no obligation, however, to give precisely the tenth of one's goods. The *Didache*, xiii. 3 sqq., speaks only of the "first-fruits," which were to be given to the prophets or to the poor. Even in Cyprian (*de eccl. unit.* c. 26) we find the expression, *nunc de patrimonio nec decimas damus*. It is in the Apostolic Constitutions that we find for the first time the tithes mentioned regularly along with first-fruits and free-will offerings (ἐκούσια), — II. cc. 25, 27, 28, 34–36; III. c. 4; IV. cc. 6–10; VII. c. 29; VIII. c. 29. — Besides the offerings in kind, there were, in the West at least, monthly contributions in money (cf. Tertul. *Apol.* c. 39, *modicam unusquisque stipem menstrua die vel cum velit et si modo velit et si modo possit apponit; nam nemo compellitur, sed sponte confert*) and a corresponding monthly distribution to the clergy (*divisiones mensurnae*, Cypr. *ep.* 34 : 4; 39 : 5; cf. O. Ritschl, *Cyprian*, p. 207; — also in Rome, cf. Euseb. *H. E.* V. 28 : 10). The monthly contributions correspond with the usage



made the prayer of thanksgiving at the Eucharist and received the offerings was at the same time the ordinary dispenser of the gifts; <sup>3</sup> for administration did not mean hoarding and increasing, but prompt and impartial distribution to the various objects of the Church's charity. The gifts of the Church served principally for the support of the poor, for the practical philanthropy which was so characteristic a feature of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> It lay

of the secular guilds; yet with this difference, that the Church did not specify the amount of the contribution, nor exact it if it could not be paid regularly or on a particular day, whereas in all the pagan clubs or guilds the payment of the regular dues was a condition of membership. The significance of the gifts was ever the same: they were offerings which were *presented to God* through the medium of the recipient. Hence it is that they were generally presented at the Eucharist. Cf. *Apost. Const.* II. c. 25: "What were then (in the Old Testament) first-fruits, and tithes, and consecrated things, and gifts, are now oblations, which are presented by the holy bishops to the Lord God."

<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr, *Apol.* I. c. 67 (after the account of the Eucharistic celebration conducted by the "president of the brethren"): "They that are well-to-do and willing give what each one thinks fit, and what is collected is deposited with the president, and he succors the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, — in a word, he becomes the care-taker of all that are needy." We find the bishop referred to as both receiver and dispenser of the gifts in 1 *Clem. ad Cor.* c. 44: "It will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblameably and holily." The distribution of the gifts is a part of the "offering" of them to God; and the qualification "unblameably and holily" is the more significant if we take it to refer to this delicate part of the bishop's function. In the Church at Jerusalem, before the appointment of the Seven, the Apostles alone exercised both the ministry of the word and the ministry of tables, that is, the distribution of the gifts (Acts 6 : 2-4).

<sup>4</sup> Tertul. *Apol.* c. 39: the contributions of the Church members are used *non epulis nec potaculis* (as in the pagan societies), *sed egenis alendis humanisque*. *Didache*, xi. 7: when there is no prophet in the congregation the first-fruits shall be given to the poor. Apart from the care of the poor, the Church property served for the support of the teachers of the Gospel (see above, p. 247), and later for the support of the clergy (see above, note 2, on the distribution of sportulae to the clergy, and regular sums of money, — cf. also below, note I). According

in the nature of the case that the gifts flowed in most abundantly at the principal assembly. We have seen that the presidency of the principal assembly fell naturally to the most highly esteemed teacher in the community, — that is to say, the gift of administering the word was one of the requisites of this office. We have now to add as a further requisite the gift of administering the Church property. These two faculties will appear far from incompatible when we have inquired, What is the nature of Church property? and what does the administration of it signify?

If the local community of disciples had been regarded as a guild, or as a secular society of any sort, associated and organized according to a secular norm, the property which it possessed must have been regarded as the property of the society, to be controlled and expended according to the good pleasure of the *congregation*. But nothing of the sort was the case. It is true that in the third century and later we hear of the *pecunia ecclesiae*<sup>5</sup>

to Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 43 : 11 there were 155 clergy and 1500 poor supported by the Roman Church about the middle of the third century. The Church property was intended solely for *distribution*, and so in the earliest time those who possessed real estate which they wished to present to the Church, promptly sold it and contributed its price to the common fund (cf. Acts 2 : 45 ; 4 : 34-37 ; 5 : 1 sqq.). While it was essential to the aim of the pagan societies or clubs to form a nucleus of club property, an *arca communis* (of which, under certain circumstances at least, a member on leaving the society might require his share); the Church, on the contrary, during the first centuries amassed no fund of earthly possessions. In principle the Church was without property; with respect to earthly goods it took no care for the morrow neither gathered into barns; collections were made for the immediate necessity and straightway expended. The Church thus “lived from hand to mouth”; its only capital was the readiness of its members to contribute (O. Ritschl, *Cyprian*, pp. 204 sqq.).

<sup>5</sup> Cyprian, *ep.* 52 : 1, 2. Cf. Tertullian, *de praescr. haeret.* c. 30 : Marcion quidem cum ducentis sestertiis quae *ecclesiae* intulerat.

and the ἐκκλησιαστικά πράγματα,<sup>6</sup> and so soon as the Church possessed a distinctive house of worship we find it called the οἶκος τῆς ἐκκλησίας,<sup>7</sup> — that means, however, if we translate literally, the property or house “of Christendom.” But from the primitive point of view such property of Christendom is not the property of the congregation, but rather God’s property; and hence the house of worship was known more properly by the name, “the house of God,”<sup>8</sup> and both this and all other goods which were dedicated to the use of the Church were called τὰ κυριακά, — the Lord’s possession.<sup>9</sup> Such was unquestionably the view of the very earliest time. The gifts which constituted the pecunia ecclesiae were regarded as *offerings*, presented to God, not to men, nor even to the Church; and hence to give a lying account of such gifts was to lie not unto men but unto God.<sup>10</sup> This religious, spiritual conception effectually excluded during the first three centuries any legal notion; it was the only conception current with regard to Church property, and alone determined its status and use. Church property therefore constitutes no exception to the rule we have insisted upon. Even for the administration of Church property there need be — properly considered, there can be — no purely human and legally devised organization, no finance administration of the worldly sort, and no economic officers who exercise their functions solely in virtue of a regular or legal commission from the congregation. Over God’s prop-

<sup>6</sup> *Apost. Const.* II. c. 35; *Apost. Canons*, c. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Euseb. *H. E.* VII. 30 : 19. The building itself is called by Clemens Alex. (*Stromat.* VII. c. 5) ἐκκλησία.

<sup>8</sup> Hippolytus (*Hippolyti fragm.* ed. Lagarde, p. 149) : τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ. Tertullian, *adv. Valentin.* (A. D. 205–208) c. 3 : nostrae columbae domus.

<sup>9</sup> For example, *Apost. Const.* cc. 24 sqq.

<sup>10</sup> Acts 5 : 3, 4, 9.

erty the congregation has no authority, nor has any man, but only God alone.

Hence it is only in God's name that the gifts of the Church can be received and administered. The reception and administration of Church property is a *priestly* act, which can be performed only by God's representative.<sup>11</sup>

Who is the priestly vicar of God in the Ecclesia? The answer of the primitive age is one which our previous discussion has prepared us to expect: the gifted teacher is God's representative in this function as in all other functions of government and administration. In his teaching charisma is included the charisma of administering the gifts; and this administration appears the more appropriate to the teaching office, since it consisted principally in distributing to the necessities of the saints, and was therefore closely related to the cure of souls. Hence it is that in the first days of the Church at Jerusalem the Apostles both received and administered the gifts,<sup>12</sup> until "seven" other gifted teachers, "men full of the Holy Ghost," were appointed to perform a part of this service in their stead, as men who likewise were endowed by God for such an office.<sup>13</sup> For

<sup>11</sup> *Didache*, xiii. 3: the first-fruits shall be brought to the prophets, "for they are your high priests." *Apost. Const.* II. c. 27: "ye ought therefore to bring your sacrifices and oblations to the bishop as to a high priest," c. 34: "giving to him (the bishop) as to God's priest," c. 35: "For it is thy duty to give, and his to administer; . . . for he has One who will call him to account, the Lord God, who put this administration into his hands and counted him worthy of the *priesthood* of so great dignity."

<sup>12</sup> Acts 4: 35, 37; 5: 2; 6: 2.

<sup>13</sup> Acts 6: 1 sqq. The men chosen for the ministry of tables (distribution of the gifts) must be "full of the Spirit and of wisdom." Among them was Stephen, "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit"; and Philip, who afterwards appeared as an *evangelist* (cf. Acts 8: 5 sqq., 40; 21: 8). It is plain that fulness of the Spirit and of wisdom means the



the same reason the prophets received the gifts and first-fruits (both being alike regarded as offerings to God) as the high-priestly administrators of God's property.<sup>14</sup> How completely this excludes the notion that

gift of teaching the word, of proclaiming the Gospel. Teaching and the administration of the gifts stood in a practical relation to one another, since both ministered to the cure of souls; but the chief significance of the charisma in this connection lay in the fact that it singled out the possessor as one called by God to act in his stead. — From the above we may see how little justification there is for the widely prevalent view that the formation of an organized congregation at Jerusalem began with the appointment of the Seven, which has been regarded since the third century as the origin of the diaconate (cf. Cyprian, *ep.* 3:3), and lately by Ritschl (*Entstehung*, pp. 355-357) as the origin of the presbyterate. The Seven are not to be accounted mere functionaries of the local congregation at Jerusalem, any more than were the Apostles: they did not act in the name of the congregation, but like the Apostles they were God's ministers and representatives, and acted only in God's name. It is well known that the office of the Seven had but a short duration. In Rome, however, the number of the deacons was limited to seven with obvious reference to this early institution, and the view of the Roman Church is reflected in the passage from Cyprian just cited. Cf. § 22.

<sup>14</sup> *Didache*, xiii. 3, — see above, note 11. The prophet receives the first-fruits not merely for his own support, but principally for the purpose of distributing them to the poor. For the prophet himself, according to the *Didache*, is bound to lead an ascetic life (xi. 3: apostles and prophets must live *κατὰ δόγμα τοῦ εὐαγγελίου*; v. 8: the prophet must have the *τρόποι κυρίου*; in both passages a life of poverty without cares and without possessions is meant, — also without marriage, v. 11, — cf. Harnack's notes on these passages). Harnack's view, *Proleg.* p. 120, that only the wandering prophet was bound to lead an ascetic life, rests upon the false assumption that the wandering prophet is to be distinguished from the apostle; whereas the wandering prophet himself is an apostle. The prophet of the *Didache*, who like the apostle is required to live "according to the Gospel," is obviously a person who has taken up his abode in the congregation: he receives the first-fruits, *notwithstanding* the fact that he is bound to lead an ascetic life. As the servant of God the prophet has a special vocation to minister to the poor: the true prophet can "in the Spirit" order the preparation of a meal ("a table") for the poor, but he may not taste of it himself; he can "in the Spirit" order money, again not for himself, but for the poor (xi. 9, 12; — it was charged against the Montanistic prophets that they took money for themselves, Euseb. *H. E.* V. 18: 4 sqq.). In like manner the first-fruits were given to the prophet (and this is undoubtedly to be associated with the fact

Church property is to be administered in the name of the congregation.

In the early Church at Jerusalem certain members brought the price of their possessions and laid them "at the Apostles' feet." These offerings, like all others, became God's property, which is equivalent to Church property. But were they regarded as the property of the congregation? and was it as officials of the congregation that the Apostles disposed of them? The first-fruits, which according to the *Didache* were given to the prophets as "high-priests," were likewise Church property (God's property) in the fullest sense of the word. Did they then belong to the congregation? and did the prophets, either in distributing them to the poor or in using them for themselves, act as congregational officials? Certainly not. Why then should the function of the bishop be interpreted differently, when the earliest evidence we have on this point attributes to him the same character as God's representative? It was as "priest of God," as *θεοῦ οἰκονόμος*, that the bishop exercised authority over the Church property.

It was not till the fourth century, when the legal organization was already penetrating all spheres of Church life, that a juristic conception was applied to Church property. But even then the primitive religious conception was not altogether superseded: the idea which became the ruling one was not that of corporate

that the prophet was president of the Eucharist), but again, not principally for his own use, but that he might divide them among the poor. Hence the injunction in xiii. 4: when no prophet is at hand the first-fruits shall be given (directly) to the poor. The prophet, with the reception of the gifts, had also the administration (distribution) of them. Hence the comprehensive superintendency which the prophets enjoyed, — Lucian, *Peregr. Prot.* c. 11: *προφήτης καὶ θιασάρχης καὶ ξυναγωγεὺς*. In the gift of prophecy lies the gift of regiment, and with it the gift of administering the Church property.

property, but of institutional property, — Church property only in the sense that it was held by the Church in trust for the ends which God might be supposed to designate. Hence even from the legal point of view it still remained God's possession, and throughout the whole of the Middle Ages the law of Church property was governed by the idea, that it is virtually the property of God or of the saints. The conception that the congregation itself is the possessor of the goods which it holds and administers was utterly unknown in ancient times. Therefore in the administration or stewardship of such property there was no attempt to apply the congregational principle, no effort to express the corporate will of the congregation according to a democratic or a representative principle of government: on the contrary, it was the principle of sovereign authority which was alone applicable to the case, administration, not in virtue of a mandate of the congregation, but in virtue of a mandate received from above, from God himself, the giver of the spiritual charisma which constituted at once the authorization and the equipment of God's steward.

H. Sohm (p. 75) has a long note on the legal status of Church property before and after Constantine, which deserves more attention than it is likely to receive as a foot-note. In my *Monuments of the Early Church* (pp. 53–61), where my purpose was not to state my own opinion but the common consensus, I gave a sketch of the now popular theory of De Rossi, that during the ages of persecution the Church was able to hold its property in corporate title under the legal fiction that it was one of the poor-man's burial societies (*collegia tenuiorum*) which was the only sort of private association suffered to exist within the Roman state. This theory has been accepted by many recent writers as though it were completely proved; and it forms

the basis, or at least the suggestion, of the many recent attempts to explain both the organization and the ritual of the Church by reference to the example of various sorts of pagan societies. But in the same connection I quoted a significant passage from an unpublished work by Duchesne (*Les Origines chrétiennes*, xxiii. § 4, — lithographed for private circulation) which reveals in a few significant words how slight a basis of fact the theory can boast.

Sohm challenges the theory chiefly on the ground that it implies a notion of Church property (viz. as the corporate property of the congregation) which does not accord with the Christian view of this subject which prevailed both before and after the time in question. Granting even that the *State* may have regarded the Church property in this light (as it certainly did in the time of Constantine), Sohm justly observes that this is no proof that the Christians themselves entertained the same view. Professor Sohm's discussion of this subject, which I here reproduce, is the more worthy of attention because it comes from one of the most distinguished students of the Roman Law.

Sohm remarks in the first place that the passage from Tertullian (*Apol.* c. 39) which has been much relied upon in support of this theory, is in reality unfavorable to it. In this Apology Tertullian lays the whole emphasis of his defence on the *religion* and *morality* of the Christians, and in the passage in question he makes little of the formal bonds of organization in comparison with the fellowship of a common faith and moral ideal — *corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae unitate et spe foedere*, — not, therefore, a sort of burial society or mutual benefit association. Indeed, Tertullian actually disclaims any comparison between the Church and the pagan associations, particularly the burial clubs, when he says in effect: we have only religious and moral aims — none that are secular or commercial, — and “even if” we have “a kind of coffer” (like that of the clubs), yet we have no initiation fees or compulsory dues, and no common banquets, like those of the *collegia* which are provided out of the common coffer; on the contrary, what we have is expended solely for charity (the *stipis collatio*



of the collegia was *not* used for charity, cf. Marquardt, *Römische Staatsverwaltung*, Bd. 3, 2nd ed. 1885, p. 142, n. 4). The passage (*Apol. c. 39*) reads: *Etiam, si quod arcae genus est, non de honoraria summa quasi redemptae religionis congregatur. Modicam unusquisque stipem menstrua die vel cum velit et si modo velit et si modo possit, nam nemo compellitur, sed sponte confert. Haec quasi deposita pietatis* (not as a corporate property held for the benefit of the members who subscribe, or for the expense of their common cultus) *sunt. Nam inde non epulis nec potaculis nec ingratiis voratrinis dispensatur, sed eginis alendis humanisque.* It is clear that Tertullian in giving this description of the Christian society had the collegia in mind, especially the collegia tenuiorum, but his purpose was to show that the Christian society lacked the distinctive characteristics of the secular associations; and that therefore the Roman laws of association, which in principle prohibited all collegia and made only one general exception in favor of the collegia funeraticia vel tenuiorum, was not applicable to the Church. There is nothing here in the way of an argument that the Churches might be regarded as collegia funeraticia and hence claim recognition as instances of the one class of associations which was allowed and for which no express license was required. Tertullian defends the Christian society from the point of view that it is merely a community of faith, *without* a guild-like organization, consequently *without* guild property in the proper sense, with purely spiritual aims (*coimus orantes*) and purely spiritual discipline (*censura divina*); and he therefore designates the Church *not* as a collegium, but preferably as a *secta*, — *i. e.* as a sort of philosophic school, — indicating that it is the community of conviction, not the formal bonds of organization, which holds the Church together.

If Tertullian himself disclaims any comparison between the Church and the collegia tenuiorum, it is not to be supposed that the State recognized the Christian society under this aspect, as a legal corporation capable of holding property, and hence felt itself bound to protect its corporate rights of possession. It is a significant fact that even where Church property was actually taken under the protection of the State, the action was

prompted, not by regard for property rights, but by considerations of policy, — as in the case of a piece of ground disputed between the Christians and the guild of cooks, where Alexander Severus (Lampridius, *Alex. Sev.* c. 49) intervened with the decision that it was better God should be worshipped there than that the place be used for a tavern. The two rescripts of Gallienus to the Egyptian bishops (Euseb. *H. E.* VII. 13) (from which we have to judge the character of that emperor's edict of 260) practically gave the bishops the free use of the Churches and cemeteries; not, however, in a way that explicitly recognized their property rights; but merely by releasing the magistrates' attachment upon the property (ἀπὸ τῶν τόπων τῶν θρασκευσίμων ἀποχωρήσωσι), permitting the bishops to avail themselves of the edict (τῆς ἀντιγραφῆς τῆς ἐμῆς τῷ τύπῳ χρῆσθαι δύνασθε) and to take *de facto* possession (τὰ τῶν καλουμένων κοιμητηρίων ἀπολαμβάνειν ἐπιτρέπων), without any sort of legal recognition either of the Christian Church as such or of its property (cf. Harnack in Herzog's *Realencykl.* 3rd ed. Bd. 3, p. 828). The order obtained in the year 272 from the Emperor Aurelian to oblige Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch, to relinquish the Church property (οἶκος τῆς ἐκκλησίας) after his deposition by the Synod of Antioch (269), was an administrative act *extra ordinem*, and in fact an act of imperial grace. It was only by a *supplicatio* addressed to the Emperor that this end could be attained, because it involved an extraordinary favor which was not within the competence of the provincial magistrates (cf. Mommsen, *Röm. Staatsrecht*, 2nd ed. Bd. 2, p. 936). Hence it is that Eusebius regards this decision as a sign of the favorable disposition of Aurelian (*H. E.* VII. 30): τοιοῦτος μὲν γέ τις ἦν τὸ τηνικάδε περὶ ἡμᾶς ὁ Αὐρηλιανός. So long as Zenobia was at the helm, *i. e.* until 272, nothing could be effected, because a *legal* claim for the restitution of the Church property did not exist.

Until the time of Constantine there was no such thing as Church property *de jure*, but only *de facto*, and it is merely such *de facto* property that is referred to by the edict of Maximinus of the year 313 (Euseb. *H. E.* IX. 10: οἰκίαι καὶ χωρία τοῦ διακαίου τῶν χριστιανῶν) and the Nicomedian ordinance of

Licinius of the same year (Lactantius, *de morte persec.* c. 48: *ad jus corporis eorum, id est ecclesiarum, non hominum singulorum pertinentia*),—cf. Constantine's edict of the year 324 (Euseb. *Vita Const.* II. c. 39): ἅπαντα ὅσα ἐκκλησίαις προσήκειν ὁρθῶς ἂν φανείη.

Under Constantine the Church did undoubtedly acquire legal possession of its property. But the Roman Law had only one category under which such tenure could be classed,—that of the juristic person. Indeed, in the first instance, only one sort of juristic person was recognized, the corporation (*corpus, collegium*), for the conception had not yet arisen of an institution or charitable foundation (later known in Roman Law as *pia opera* or *universitas bonorum*) capable of holding property in trust for an object defined by the donor or founder. For this reason the Church property was at first defined as the property of a *corpus*, that is, of the Church as a corporation:—cf. the ordinance of 313, *ad jus corporis eorum*; and in the Codex, lib. 1, Constitution *de sacros. eccl.* (1 : 2), which bestows the right of inheritance upon the concilium catholicae (ecclesiae). Echoes appear in later constitutions cited by Sohm (p. 77), who refers to Gierke, *Genossenschaftsrecht*, Bd. 3, p. 117, note 18,—a work which I have not been able to find in America, though it has been brought to the attention of English jurists through the translation of a small section of it by Professor Maitland, *The Political Theories of the Middle Age*, 1900.

But it was only in name that Church property was put upon the same footing as corporate property in the Roman sense. From the characterization of the religious foundations of the Church as property of the *corpus*, no rights of the congregation in such property were ever inferred. In fact, the Roman Law found itself obliged by the nature of Church property to admit a new category of property, institutional (foundational) property, with the resultant distinction of two sorts of juristic persons which is still current in the Civil Law. In the imperial constitutions of the fifth and sixth centuries the Church property already appears as institutional property: it is only rarely and by way of reminiscence that the corpus, consortium, etc. are

named as the subject of possession ; as a general rule the subject expressly named is a particular church (*i. e.* the building, regarded as the visible manifestation of the ecclesiastical institution), the *aedes sacra*, the *domus divinae*, *domus venerabilis*, *monasteria*, *xenotrophia*, *ptochotrophia*, etc. (cf. Gierke, *op. cit.* Bd. 3, p. 116, n. 15). Beside this legal conception there still persisted the primitive and purely religious idea, which regarded the Church property as really the property of God or Christ, — or of the saints, in the sense that the property of the saints is in truth God's property (Augustine, *contra Faust.* xx. 21 : *nulli martyrum, sed ipso deo martyrum, quamvis in memoriis martyrum constituamus altaria*). This religious conception explains the administration of Church property by the bishop as God's priest, not by the congregation or its representatives ; and it profoundly influenced the legal treatment of the subject throughout the Middle Ages. The thought which remains fundamental throughout the whole development is this, that Church property is designed to serve, not the purpose of any man, nor of any human society (the congregation for example), but God's purpose ; and that therefore it is appropriately held, not as corporation property (property *belonging* in common to the members of a society), but as institutional property (property held in trust for predetermined ends which it is not within the competence of the trustees to alter). This is the idea which lies at the basis of the common-law distinction to-day. For not only did the peculiar nature of Church property lead to the distinction of the second juristic person in Roman Law, but it still more profoundly affected the conceptions of the common law. The earliest notion of a corporation in English law was derived from the parish vestry, which was assumed to hold property as trustee for the saint to whom the church was dedicated and to whom the whole property really belonged. Corporation law in England has ever preserved traces of this origin, and statutory enactments in America show an increasing tendency to assimilate the business corporation to the norm of the religious or charitable foundation, — to regard the property of all corporations as though it legally belonged, not directly to the stock-holders, but to the officers and directors (the



"corporation" in the modern sense), who are supposed to hold it as it were in trusteeship for the ends specified in the charter of incorporation.

We have to consider next the fact that the reception of the gifts of the Church empowers the receiver to partake of them *for himself*. The offerings of the Church have a three-fold purpose: (1) use at the Eucharistic feast (particularly as combined with the agape);<sup>15</sup> (2) distribution to the poor;<sup>16</sup> (3) support of the teaching office,—the teacher by profession is encouraged to rely upon the offerings of the disciples.<sup>17</sup> In all three cases the Church property is spent *for God*. The gift to the poor is a gift to God.<sup>18</sup> And such is equally the case when the gift is made to the teacher of the Gospel.<sup>19</sup> The *honor* rendered to the teaching

<sup>15</sup> See note 2.

<sup>16</sup> See notes 3 & 4.

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 247. The clergy succeeded in this respect to the position of the teacher, cf. note 4, above, and below, note I. Still, the clergy (bishops and deacons) did not every where acquire, like the teachers, the right to be supported by the congregation,—cf. Achelis, *Canon. Hippolyti*, in *Texte u. Unters.* Bd. 6, Heft 4, p. 192.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 9 : 11–13,—“the ministration of this service (the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem) beareth interest through many thanksgivings unto God.” Heb. 13 : 16,—“to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased.” Widows and the needy were hence called “God’s altar” (*θυσιαστήριον θεοῦ*), Polycarp, *Philip.* 4 : 3; *Apost. Const.* II. c. 26; III. c. 6; IV. c. 3. Related to this is the notion that a gift to the poor is a ransom for sin:—*Didache*, iv. 6; *Barnabas*, 19 : 20; 2 *Clem.* 16 : 4; *Apost. Church Order*, c. 13; *Apost. Const.* VII. c. 12. The bishop, therefore, receives the gifts as “God’s mediator,” *Apost. Const.* II. c. 35. Höfling, *Lehre von Opfer*, 1851, pp. 24, 28.

<sup>19</sup> The support which St. Paul receives from the Philippians is “a sacrifice well-pleasing to God,” Phil. 4 : 18. The first-fruits are regarded as offered to God:—Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* IV. 29 : 5, dominus noster . . . suis discipulis dans consilium, primitias deo offerre ex suis creaturis. They were given to the prophet or to the poor, note 4. Later the Church property was used for the support of the poor and the clergy.

office consists in this, that he has a share in God's property, that a gift to him is equivalent to a gift to God, and that he is thus recognized in this respect as God's deputy.<sup>20</sup> The granting of a share in God's property is the highest outward honor which the Church has to give. Hence the frequent use of the word "honor" in early Christian literature as though it had no other connotation than a share in the offerings — see below, note I. This honor belongs to the poor, who in this sense are accounted among the first members of the community, — the "riches of the Church," as St. Lawrence called them. It belongs likewise to the teacher of the Gospel. We may see in this another reason why it is the part of the gifted teacher to receive the offerings at the Eucharist, namely, because he is entitled to make use of them in part for himself, a gift to him being equivalent to a gift to God. We see that *in principle* the reception of the offerings at the Eucharist implies the right of the receiver to a share in them. In other words: whoever celebrates the Eucharist has the position of a priest and deputy of God — *i. e.* the position of a *teacher of the Gospel*.

I. *On the words "honor," "to honor," "honored," as used to denote a share of the Church offerings.* The earliest passage in which this usage occurs outside of the Pastoral Epistles —

<sup>20</sup> The prophets receive the first-fruits, for they are "your high-priests"; the bishop receives the gifts as "God's priest," — above, note 11. Prophets and teachers are "the honored (persons)" in the Church; bishops and deacons are to be honored like them, because they perform the ministry of prophets and teachers, *Didache*, xv. 1 : 2. The "honor" is priestly honor (cf. Heb. 5 : 4, 5, τὴν τιμὴν . . . γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα), and priestly honor belongs in principle only to an incumbent of the teaching office — hence the injunction that bishops and deacons shall be honored as "prophets and teachers": they too shall be accorded priestly honor. The priestly honor finds its outward expression in the reception of the offerings, cf. note I.

consequently the earliest passage whose date can be securely determined — is 1 *Clem. ad Cor.* 44:6, the Corinthians have displaced certain bishops “from the office in which they were blamelessly honored” (ἐκ τῆς ἀμέμπτως αὐτοῖς τετιμημένης λειτουργίας). Cf. Gebhardt and Harnack’s ed. Lightfoot, against the testimony of all the authorities, prefers to substitute *τετηρημένης* (“the office which they blamelessly respected”). The sentence next but one preceding this affirms that it would be no small sin to cast out “those that had blamelessly and holily offered the gifts of the bishop’s office.” The “blameless offering of the gifts,” and the “office in which they were blamelessly honored,” must signify the same thing,—*i. e.* the reception of the gifts at the Eucharist, and the “offering” and administering which was implied in this (see note 3), is the “honor” which is associated with the bishop’s office. Corresponding to this we have the injunction in 1 Tim. 5:17, 18, “Let the diligently presiding elders be accounted worthy of *double honor*, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire.” What is meant is, that such elders shall receive a double portion of the offerings,—therein consists the “double honor,” Holtzmann, *Pastoralbr.* p. 213. Cf. *Apost. Const.* II. c. 28 (the passage corresponds with the *Didaskalia*, and therefore belongs to the third century): at a love-feast the bishop’s portion (“*i. e.* the first-fruits”) must first be set aside for him, even if he be not present, “for the honor (εἰς τιμήν) of God, who hath bestowed upon him the priesthood.” The widows are to receive a single portion, and the deacons a double one “in honor (εἰς γέρας) of Christ.” “If any one wish to honor (τιμᾶν) the presbyters, let him give them a double portion as to the deacons; for they ought to be honored (τιμᾶσθαι) as apostles: . . . let the laity, then, render by their *gifts* the appropriate *honor* due to each rank.” We find the same usage presented with equal clearness in Source A of the *Apost. Church Order* of the latter part of the second century (Harnack, *Texte u. Unters.* II. 5, p. 14): “The presbyters on the right shall take care for the bishops at the altar, in order that (the bishops) *τιμήσωσι καὶ*

ἐντιμωθῶσιν, εἰς ὃ ἂν δέῃ" — that is, with the assistance of the presbyters, the bishops receive the gifts at the altar, so that they (the bishops) may both *give honor* (that is, distribute the gifts to those to whom they are due, especially to the poor), and themselves *receive honor*, "so far as it may be necessary" (that is, take such a share of the offerings as is required for their own support), — cf. Harnack's commentary on the passage. The reception of the offerings is "honor" *par excellence*. Compare finally *Apost. Church Order*, c. 12 (about the beginning of the fourth century, — text in Harnack's ed. of *Didache*): "Thou shalt *honor* him (the teacher of the Gospel) according to thine ability, from thy sweat and from the labor of thy hands, . . . for the laborer is worthy of his hire, and thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." Also the word honor as it is used in 1 *Clem.* 1:3 ("rendering unto the elders who are among you the honor which is their due") and c. 21:6 ("let us honor the elders") must refer in part at least to the privilege which the elders (the older men of the community) enjoyed in connection with the offering of the gifts at the Eucharist: it is precisely with regard to this point (the position of honor which ought to be accorded the πρεσβύτεροι at the Eucharist) that St. Clement finds occasion to blame the Corinthians (cc. 44, 54, 57). Cf. §§ 21, 23.

We see from the foregoing that the Eucharistic celebration called for a gifted teacher, not only to offer the thanksgiving prayer, but to receive and administer the Church property. Hence the presidency at the Eucharist fell in the first place to an apostle, or prophet, or to some person who was honored in the community as a gifted teacher of the Gospel. But it was not in every assembly, not even in every principal assembly, that such a teacher was to be found. The teaching charisma was rare in Christendom, — hence the high regard in which it was held. To *make* such a teacher was not within the competence of the as-



sembly: neither election, ordination, nor any sort of commission from the part of the assembly could confer the apostolic gift of teaching; it was the gift of God, and it denoted a divine commission. Hence the question arises, who shall celebrate the Eucharist and administer the Church property when there is no apostle, prophet, or teacher in the assembly, no one who is called to the preaching of the Gospel as his life profession?

The Eucharist might be celebrated wherever there was a Church of the disciples, that is, wherever two or three were gathered together: it could not and need not be deferred for lack of a gifted teacher. Add to this the fact that the distribution of the gifts, which was associated at least with the principal Eucharistic assembly, constituted a regularly recurring *local interest* which was of too pressing and practical a character to admit of postponement. This presents the sphere in which we find the conditions which first prompted the development of a *local* organization, the congregational organization as we now understand it. This local organization found its first expression in the episcopal office.

## § 21, BISHOPS<sup>1</sup>

To supply the defect of charismatic teachers, bishops were elected, whose distinctive function it was to preside at the Eucharist and administer the Church property. The earliest mention of such officers we find in Phil. 1: 1, — St. Paul addresses the saints which art at Philippi “with bishops and deacons.” The contents of the epistle,

<sup>1</sup> Much of the material of this section is drawn from Sohm, § 9, — though with some important differences of view.

in which St. Paul thanks the Philippians for the gifts he had received from them at various times (4 : 10-19), make it seem likely that the "bishops and deacons" are here specially noticed in view of the *offerings* which they were instrumental in sending the Apostle;<sup>2</sup> and that therefore the bishops and deacons at Philippi were responsible for the distribution of the Eucharistic gifts, and consequently for the administration of the Eucharist. The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians at the end of the first century confidently attributes the establishment of bishops and deacons to the Apostles. In this source we find *election* to the episcopal office expressly emphasized, and the essence of the episcopate is made to consist in the "offering of the gifts."<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of

<sup>2</sup> It was Harnack who first called attention to this, first in his ed. of Hatch's work, p. 233, and afterwards in the *Theol. Lit.-Zeitung*, 1889, p. 419. In the latter place he gives an apt translation of Phil. 1 : 3, "I thank my God for your remembrance of me of every sort" (*ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μυνείᾳ ὑμῶν*), thereby finding a reference at the very beginning of the letter to the gift of money which the Apostle had received from the Philippian Church, which is afterwards mentioned expressly in 4 : 10 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> 1 *Clem.* 44 : 3, 4, — "Those therefore who were appointed by them (the Apostles), or afterwards by other men of repute with the consent of the whole Church, and have administered unblamably to the flock of Christ, . . . — these men we consider to be unjustly thrust out from their ministrations. For it will be no light sin for us, if we thrust out those who have offered the gifts of the bishop's office unblamably and holily." With this passage, the full importance of which has only recently been recognized, the first two verses of c. 44 are closely related : "The Apostles knew beforehand" that there would be "strife over the name of the bishop's office"; in consequence of this foreknowledge "they appointed the aforesaid" (c. 42) first converts (now dead) as bishops and deacons, *καὶ μετὰξὺ ἐπινομήν ἔδωκαν*, "in order that, if these should fall asleep, other approved men might succeed to their ministration." The word *ἐπινομήν*, which is read in the best manuscripts, is generally supposed to be meaningless here, — cf. Lightfoot, *in loc.*, who proposes the purely conjectural emendation *ἐπιμονήν*. But there can be no doubt that the literal meaning of the word is a *distribution*, and Sohlm (p. 82, n. 4) urges that this gives a completely satisfactory sense. The suggestion is certainly a forcible one, and with the appreciation we have already

the second century the *Didache* urges it already as the *duty* of the congregation to "elect bishops and deacons"; and here too the essential function of the office appears to be the administration of the Eucharist — and consequently of the gifts.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, neither bishops, deacons, nor elders are mentioned in St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, although some reference to such officers, if they existed in these Churches, would seem to be pertinent to the subjects discussed, especially in 1 Cor. 12 sqq. and 2 Cor. 9.

It appears, therefore, that the episcopal organization was not among the earliest institutions of Christianity, but that it nevertheless originated in apostolic times. It was already established at Philippi about the year 60. The Epistle of Clement shows that at the end of the

attained of the character of the bishop's office, it seems as though no more appropriate word could be used in this place. Sohm interprets the passage as follows: the Apostles appoint their first converts as bishops and deacons and "in the mean time" (*μεταξύ*, i. e. till their death, so long as they live, for the whole interval before others succeed them) they gave (to them the) *distribution*, in order that this ministration, being established in their office, might be passed on to other approved men upon their demise. That is to say: because the Apostles foresaw a strife over the *ἐπισκοπή*, they gave the *ἐπινομή* to the appointed bishops and deacons (and likewise to their successors) *for their life-time*. Through the apostolic grant of the "distribution" to these officers the strife over the episcopate is settled.

<sup>4</sup> *Didache*, xv. 1, "Therefore (*οὖν*) elect for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord." Sohm very reasonably insists that the *οὖν* refers to the preceding chapter (xiv), where the subject is the weekly Eucharist, and the necessity is twice urged that the "sacrifice" of the assembly must "be pure." The injunction to elect bishops and deacons immediately follows this and is introduced by a "therefore":—from the necessity of celebrating the Eucharistic feast, and of celebrating it duly, so that the "offering may be pure," follows the duty of electing bishops and deacons "worthy of the Lord." The function of bishops and deacons consists in the administration of the Eucharist. So Hatch in Harnack's *Dogmengesch.* 2nd ed. Bd. 1, p. 182, note 1.

century it was regarded both at Rome and at Corinth as an ancient institution, and the Acts and Pastoral Epistles prove its dissemination in the East. So we have reason to suppose that the office of bishop was established, at least in a considerable number of Churches, about the middle of the first century. The practical motives we have already considered suffice to account for its establishment, while on the other hand the continued ministry of charismatic teachers serves to explain the fact that this substitutionary organization was not everywhere introduced at the same time. These two systems of organization might exist contemporaneously in Christendom (one in one Church and one in another) without any infraction of the ideal of uniformity which was cherished by the early Christians. There was not, in fact, any great difference in point of *form* between these two sorts of Church organization. It seems probable that until the second century such apostolic teachers as happened to be resident in a particular community did not assume the name of bishop, for their proper office and title was a higher one. These two sorts of officers were mutually exclusive. But, nevertheless, they performed to a considerable extent the same functions, so far as concerned the Eucharist and the administration of Church property. Any individual congregation might do without charismatically gifted teachers, or it might do without bishops, but it could not do without a president of the Eucharistic assembly and the regular administration of the gifts. The Eucharist remaining the same, the *form* of government was the same, whatever might be the individual qualifications of the officers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to insist upon this point, because a number of recent German historians have advanced the notion that we cannot find in primitive Christianity a single type of organization, but must be content



How different all this is from the now prevalent theory, it need hardly be pointed out. The prevalent theory regards the primitive bishop as an administrative officer pure and simple. Hatch represents that as president of the presbyteral council he exercised a judicial administration, while as bishop he was merely a treasurer with executive powers. Harnack recognizes the close relation of the bishop to the Eucharist, and regards him as the general administrator of the cultus. But according to the prevalent view all these functions are regarded as purely administrative, and the whole episcopal and presbyteral organization (or both of them, if they are supposed to be distinct) is regarded as the express opposite both in character and function of the charismatic organization of apostles, prophets, and teachers. The latter is occupied solely with teaching (the pastoral function, the cure of souls); the former solely with administration (discipline, financial economy, and superintendence of the liturgy). Both of these organizations are supposed to have existed side by side in the same congregations, and it is explained

to recognize many various types. The latest and most extreme exponent of this view is Réville (*Études sur les Origines de l'Épiscopat*, 1894). This is an easy way to *give up* the vexed and difficult problem of early Church organization, but it is no solution. The whole trend of our investigation hitherto excludes the notion that diversity of Church order—even of outward order—could have been tolerated by primitive Christianity. Actual diversities there were, of course, and they were to be expected where there was no rigidly established legal form. But this is not the real question. The question is rather, whether differences *in principle* were tolerated, so that *e. g.* one part of the Church might have a presbyteral organization, in imitation of the synagogue, another an episcopal, or what not, and all frankly recognized as equally legitimate manifestations of Church order. This question must be answered in the negative. We have seen that the order of the Church is founded upon God's word and is an exclusive order: there can be nothing accidental about it, nothing which depends upon human preference or whim. Cf. Sohms, p. 105.

that the increasing importance of the financial administration so increased the bishop's power and importance that he was able to absorb the function of teaching (which was originally foreign to his office, if not incompatible) and thus gradually to eliminate the charismatic ministry.

We are accustomed to think of teaching and administration as essential opposites, and it is very natural for us to attribute our conception to the primitive age and interpret the early institutions in accordance with this distinction. But from our whole study of the teaching office (particularly §§ 15 and 16) we see that this is not an historical procedure. It might be necessary to suppose that these two sorts of organization (which were certainly very different in character) performed different, or even opposite, functions, if it were true that they both existed side by side in the same community. But of this there is no proof, and the very text (*Didache*, xv. 1, — see note J, below) which furnished the suggestion for this whole theory has been wrested by Sohm from his antagonists and employed — with manifest right, I think — as the prime proof of his contention.

The view presented briefly in the last section represents that the presidency of the Eucharist implied the highest honor in the assembly, since he who occupied this position was regarded as Christ's representative, sitting in his place. But the highest honor in the Church belonged to the teacher of the Gospel. Therefore, the most honored teacher in the assembly must be selected as president of the Eucharist: and *vice versa*, he who occupies this position must be regarded as the highest teacher in the assembly. The functions associated with the presidency of the Eucharist combine to

support this conclusion: a teacher was required to offer the Eucharistic prayer; and no less to administer the gifts, which were God's property and could only be administered in his name and by one who acted in his stead. Hence the bishop in presiding over the Eucharist and the Church property did not act merely as a cultus-officer, or as a treasurer, but as incumbent of the highest office, the office of teacher. The functions which the bishop exercised in connection with the Eucharist, which from first to last constituted the core of his office, are not to be *contrasted* with the teaching function, but rather to be regarded as a special application of it. The very fact that the bishop appears as the administrator of the Eucharist and of the Church property is proof that he was not regarded as holding a mere administrative office, but the office of teacher, which must from the first have been associated with the episcopate.

The bishop as such is neither prophet nor teacher. When, therefore, there appears in the community a prophet, one who is equipped with the 'apostolic gift of teaching; the bishop gives place to him: it is then the prophet, not the bishop, that celebrates the Eucharist and administers the gifts.<sup>6</sup> But, what if no such gifted teacher is present? This is precisely the case which occasioned the development of the bishop's office. Then it is the bishop who must administer the Eucharist and the Church property *in place of the prophet and teacher*. This is what is affirmed by the celebrated passage of the *Didache*, where it is enjoined that bishops and deacons shall be honored "with the prophets and teachers," because they render the assembly "the service of the prophets and teachers." This refers precisely to the

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Didache*, x. 7 with xv. 1.

service of the bishops and deacons in the administration of the Eucharist and the Church property. The "service of the prophets and teachers" which the *Didache* has in mind, is not some office of instruction, but the administrative function at the Eucharist, which constituted one side of their activity as teachers. The *Didache* shows that this function belonged in the first instance to the prophets and teachers, and in the second instance to the bishops and deacons. It follows from this that the *Didache*, in classing the bishops with the prophets and teachers, does not intend to ascribe to them a *new* character (as has been hitherto supposed), viz. the character of teachers, which did not originally belong to their office; but it declares that the functions of administration at the Eucharist, *i. e.* the original functions of the bishop's office, are essentially teaching functions, which would otherwise be performed by the prophets and teachers. That is the primitive conception. The name bishop itself does not indicate an office merely of administration, but rather the cure of souls.<sup>7</sup> Unless the bishop fulfilled such func-

<sup>7</sup> Sohms (p. 87, n. 13) remarks upon the futility of Hatch's attempt to derive the name "bishop" (in the sense of officer of finance) from the civic or guild organization of the Greeks. The secular use of the word is exceedingly vague and general—it might have as many applications as the word inspector or superintendent has with us. It is only the Christian use of the word that can give us reliable information as to the meaning which the early Church attached to the name bishop, and here it is perfectly evident that *ἐπίσκοπος* is used in the sense of caretaker, one who is engaged in the cure of souls, watching over men—substantially with the same meaning as pastor. Cf. 1 Pet. 2:25, where Christ himself is spoken of as *ποιμὴν καὶ ἐπίσκοπος* (surely not treasurer!) "of your souls." Acts 20:28, where the bishops are exhorted "to shepherd (*ποιμαίνειν*) the flock of God,"—which surely indicates a feeding with God's word as a part of their pastoral activity. Ignatius (*Magnes.* 3:1) speaks of "God . . . bishop of all"—that is, naturally, of all *men*; not, as Hatch (*Organization*, p. 42) assumes, of all things. Cf. the rest of Sohms's note.



tions, it would be hard to account for the term "pastor" which was early applied to him.<sup>8</sup> The pastoral and teaching functions fell more and more into the hands of the bishop as the charismatic ministry became rarer. But the fact that such functions fell to him at all, must remain a riddle so long as we suppose that his office was originally in its functions antipodal to the teaching office.

J. Sohm's important note on pp. 85, 86, I render here literally and entire.

*Didache*, xv. 1, "Elect for yourselves, therefore [*i. e.* for the administration of the Eucharist, in order that your sacrifice may be pure], bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek, and not lovers of money, and true and approved"; ὑμῖν γὰρ λειτουργοῦσι καὶ αὐτοὶ τὴν λειτουργίαν τῶν προφῆτων καὶ διδασκάλων ("for they too perform for you the service of the prophets and teachers"). The last clause states the reason for demanding the aforesaid qualities in the bishops and deacons,—hence the γάρ. The reason lies in the function of the office, the λειτουργία. What is the λειτουργία of the bishops and deacons? It is *the same as that of the prophets and teachers*, but in such wise that the bishops and deacons appear only in the second rank—as substitutes for those who have a clearer vocation,—hence the καὶ αὐτοί, "they too." What λειτουργία of the prophets and teachers is here contemplated? Is it the ministry of teaching in the modern sense of the word, that is to say, a function which is regarded as *superadded* to the proper episcopal function of administering the Eucharist and the Church property (as the universally prevalent view would have it)? Certainly not. It would be indeed an extraordinary piece of argumentation, to say: bishops and deacons must have these qualifications, *for* (besides their proper vocation and office, which would

<sup>8</sup> The bishops are apparently indicated by the "pastors" in Ephes. 4:11. Their pastoral functions are certainly mentioned in Acts 20:28; 1 Clem. 44:3; Ignatius, *ad Rom.* 9:1.

not be indicated at all) they have to perform as an *avocation* also the office of teacher (in the now current sense). But it is said: bishops and deacons must be worthy of the Lord, *gentle and not lovers of money* (these two predicates alone have individual character), *for* they too perform the ministry of the prophets and teachers. That is: the "ministry of the prophets and teachers" which is here contemplated (upon which the bishops and deacons enter as substitutes), makes *these* two qualifications necessary, viz. gentle (or meek) and not lovers of money. There is not the least doubt that both the qualifications named have reference to the Eucharist and the administration of the gifts. Because the bishops and deacons have to perform the ministry of the prophets and teachers in the Eucharist, because this is their principal office and proper function, *therefore* the bishops and deacons must possess those qualifications. It is only in this way that the whole passage gains logical coherency. It appears here as the *principal* office of bishops and deacons to discharge the ministry of the prophets and teachers — only so is the γὰρ intelligible. As certainly then as the principal function of the bishops (and deacons, cf. § 22) consists in the administration of the Eucharist and of the offerings (above, pp. 331 sqq.), just so surely may we conclude that the "ministry of the prophets and teachers" which is here in question is no other than the *administration of the Eucharist and of the offerings*.

While this passage has hitherto counted as the strongest bulwark of the prevailing view, which separates the functions of teaching and administration, and assumes a gradual transference of the teaching function to the bishop's office (cf. Harnack's commentary to *Didache*, xv. 2); it results from a closer inspection that the passage furnishes a *complete refutation* of the universally prevalent view. It results from this passage that it was precisely the "administration" of the Eucharist and the Church property which was ascribed as a matter of principle to the teaching office (the charismatic teachers); and hence, when the administration of the Eucharist and of the Church property was confided to those who had not the teaching charisma, they represented the teaching

office as substitutes for the gifted teachers—just as has been described above. Bishops and deacons are elected *to supply the place of the prophets and teachers* (who were not always to be had) *in the presidency of the Eucharist and the administration of the gifts*. This is what the *Didache* (xv. in connection with xiv., cf. note 4) directly proves. With this agrees the warning in c. xv. 2, not to esteem meanly the bishops and deacons, “for they are the honored among you with the prophets and teachers.” Bishops and deacons enjoy the *like honor* as the prophets and teachers. What honor? The chief honor in the Church, *the honor par excellence*, is again the administration of the Eucharist and the administration (including a personal share) of the offerings (cf. p. 329). Here, too, we have the same result as before: *because* bishops and deacons administer the offerings, *like* the prophets and teachers, they are not to be meanly esteemed—although bishops and deacons are not the same as prophets and teachers. The substance of the bishop’s office is the administration of the Eucharist and of the Church property. By reason of this—viz. this “administration”—they are to be ranked with those who possess the apostolic gift of teaching.

Bishops and deacons were elected, and ordained with the laying on of hands; but so were the charismatic officers, and there is no reason to suppose that election and ordination had a different significance in the two cases. The bishop, too, was elected at the suggestion of prophecy,<sup>9</sup> and received the laying on of hands.<sup>10</sup> The elected bishop, like the teacher, counted as one who was chosen, not by the assembly, but by

<sup>9</sup> Cf. p. 256, note 4.

<sup>10</sup> The earliest testimony is Acts 14:23, “And when they had appointed them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they committed them unto the Lord.” In the fasting, as well as in the prayer and the committing them unto the Lord, the act of ordination is described,—cf. p. 258, note 6. That we have a right to regard the *appointed* presbyters in this passage as bishops will appear from the following discussion.

God.<sup>11</sup> And again, just as in the case of the teaching office, the election was not regarded as an appointment or commission in any juristic sense, but rather as a *testimony* on the part of the assembly; and the laying on of hands was regarded as a confirmation of a god-given charisma.<sup>12</sup> Thus, again, election to the episcopal office turns out to be a purely spiritual transaction.

From what class were the bishops chosen?

Since the bishop was chosen as a substitute for the teacher of apostolic gifts, it follows that he was not chosen from among the "prophets" and "teachers." Indeed, the presence of such a personage rendered the election of a bishop unnecessary. For the episcopate, it was necessary to choose a man who, in spite of his lack of the apostolic gift of teaching, was nevertheless capable of administering the teaching office, and in particular that part of it which had to do with the conduct of the Eucharist and the distribution of the Church property.

We reach the same result when we consider the list of qualifications required of the bishop in the early sources.<sup>13</sup> A certain capacity for teaching is accounted

<sup>11</sup> Cf. p. 256, note 4.

<sup>12</sup> On the charisma of the bishop see below, p. 361.

<sup>13</sup> The Epistle of Clement (44:2) requires merely that "approved men" be appointed as bishops and deacons;—cf. 42:4, the apostles "appointed their first-fruits as bishops and deacons, when they had proved them by the Spirit." The *Didache* (xv. 1) is somewhat fuller: those who are to be elected as bishops must be "worthy of the Lord, meek and not lovers of money and true and approved." The fullest list is that given in 1 Tim. 3:2-7, "The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife (μίας γυναίκος ἄνδρα), temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach (διδασκάλον); not given to wine, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?) not a novice, lest being puffed



desirable in the bishop; but little stress is laid upon this point even in the epistles to Timothy and Titus, Clement and the *Didache* say nothing about it, and the Apost. Church Order, while desiring an "educated" bishop who can "interpret the Scriptures," expressly concedes that this is not necessary. On the other hand, the qualifications upon which all the sources insist are such as are peculiarly pertinent to the bishop's functions as president of the Eucharist and administrator of the Church property. This connection explains the significance of the oft-repeated demand that the bishop be no drunkard. His responsibility for the Church funds accounts for the requisition that he be not greedy of filthy lucre.

Sohm suggests that the emphasis which is laid upon sexual purity (for *μῆας γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ*, however it may be interpreted, has substantially this significance) is likewise referable to the bishop's function at the Eu-

up he fall into the condemnation of the devil. He must have good testimony also from them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." Similarly Titus 1: 6-9, "if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe, who are not accused of riot or unruly. For the bishop must be blameless, as God's steward; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but given to hospitality, a lover of good, soberminded, just, holy, temperate; holding to the faithful word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able to exhort in the sound doctrine, and to convict the gainsayers." Compare with this Source A of the *Apost. Church Order* of the latter part of the second century (Harnack, *Texte*, II. 5, pp. 8 sqq.): in the choice of a bishop "who is worthy," it must be examined "if he has a good reputation among the heathen, if he is irreproachable, if a friend of the poor, if soberminded, no drunkard, not licentious, not greedy, or abusive, or partisan, or the like. It is well for him to be unmarried, but if not, a man who has had one wife (*ἀπὸ μῆας γυναικός* — *unius uxoris viduus*, Holtzmann); having some education, able to interpret the scriptures, — but if unlearned, then meek, abounding in love to all, in order that a bishop may never in any matter be subject to rebuke from the many."

charist — “in order that your sacrifice may be pure.” He remarks, too, that we may see in this the first intimation of the view which subsequently conditioned the development of the Catholic notion of priesthood. There is a great distance, however, between the second century rule which required a celibate bishop, or at least a widower, and the Pastoral Epistles, with their requirement of a married bishop who by ruling well his own household shall prove his capacity for “taking care of the Church of God.” How significantly this last phrase reveals the importance of the bishop’s office and the broad scope of his superintendence !

There can be no doubt that the requirements which are variously expressed as “a lover of good,” “a lover of the poor,” “abounding in love to all,” are particularly pertinent to that important part of the bishop’s work which had to do with the administration of the alms of the Church. The jealousy and contention to which this administration was likely to give rise, made it the more necessary that the bishop himself should be “not selfwilled, not soon angry,” “but gentle, not contentious,” — if indeed these qualifications do not rather refer to the bishop’s function as judge of the disputes which were brought to the assembly. That the bishop must be “given to hospitality” betokens his relation to the strangers from other Churches who expected entertainment upon their travels or as a preliminary to their settlement in the congregation. The requisition that the bishop “must have good testimony *also* from them that are without,” proves that he represented the disciples not only in their relations with other Churches, but also in their relations with the heathen society which surrounded them — hence he must be “able also to convict the gainsayers.” This gives us an idea of the

great importance of the bishop even before the Catholic age — he was already the *persona* of the community.

Finally, the bishop must be no neophyte (or novice) — not a newly baptized Christian, but one whose sterling Christian character has been proved by time. In other words, the bishop shall be chosen, not from the younger members of the Church, but from the older. It is in this sense that both the *Didache* and the Epistle of Clement demand that the bishops shall be “approved men.” In 1 *Clem.* 44:3 the bishops whom the Corinthians unjustly deprived of the administration of the Eucharist are said to be men who “for a long time have borne a good report with all”; and in 42:4 the apostles are said to have appointed their “first-fruits” as bishops — that is, the oldest members in the community, reckoning age by the term of Christian experience. We can already affirm at this point that the bishop must be an *elder* (*πρεσβύτερος*). The disciples must *know* the man whom they chose as their bishop. It is a responsible office to which the bishop is called, and one in which the most judicious conduct will hardly escape criticism and misinterpretation: at the same time it is a position of such power and influence that it is likely to turn the head of a novice — “lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

This brings us to the difficult question of the relation of the bishops to the elders in the primitive age. The view which has been generally prevalent since the Reformation, and which can be traced back to St. Jerome, regarded the bishops and presbyters as identical — they were simply two names for the same office. It is Hatch's chief service to have demolished this

theory.<sup>14</sup> It is not possible to identify the presbyters and bishops, even if we have solely in view the New Testament passages which bear on the subject, while as an explanation of the Catholic development such a theory leaves us hopelessly in the dark. But, on the other hand, it is equally inadmissible to *contrast*, as has recently been done, the bishops and presbyters as two classes of officers having disparate and opposite functions.

The facts which we have to explain are briefly these: (1) Bishops and deacons are undoubtedly represented in the Christian literature of the first century (including the New Testament) as *officers*; they are commonly associated together in such a way as proves that their functions were closely related; and together they seem to constitute a sufficient organization for the local congregation. (2) On the other hand, we find the frequent mention of presbyters (elders), who in the second century, at least, appear as formal officers distinct from the bishops, while both in the first century and the second we find the bishops classed among the presbyters, and even called presbyters simply. Still more

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Sohm, p. 92, note 27, for an estimate of Hatch's work, and for a summary of the subsequent theories which are due to his impulse. Compare also above, pp. 16 sqq. and 93 sqq. The principal theme of Hatch's *Organization of the Early Christian Churches* may be said to be the distinction between bishops and presbyters, but even on this point his work is not free from self-contradictions, and as a whole it fails to furnish any consistent view of the situation. The more positive part of Hatch's theory — his attempt to derive Church organization from the current forms of secular societies — has not proved generally acceptable, and the manifest extravagance with which he presses this theory sufficiently accounts for the fact that his just criticism of the old view has had less influence than it ought to have upon public opinion in England and America. It is to be noted, however, that all the constructive work which has lately been done in this field starts with the discrimination between presbyters and bishops.



briefly : on the one hand the bishops stand in close relation to the deacons ; on the other hand they stand in no less close a relation to the presbyters.

Of what sort was the relation in each case ? The old answer was, that the first was a relation between two different classes of officers — the only ordinary officers of the congregation ; while the second was a relation of identity — bishops were simply presbyters under another name. Hatch's theory substantially is that there were three sets of officers, and that the bishop in the discharge of one of his functions (as Church treasurer) was closely associated with the deacons, while in discharge of another (that of discipline) he presided over the college of presbyters. Sohm's solution is that there were but two sorts of officers in the Church (apart from the charismatic ministry of apostles, prophets and teachers), and these were the bishops and deacons. The presbyters during the first century were not officers, but merely a class in the community, the class of elder disciples, the " honorables " of the community, from whose number the bishop was chosen, and among whom he was ranked when it was rather dignity than office that was in question — just as were the Apostles themselves. The presbyter as such was not elected nor appointed, but enjoyed his informal position of leadership by common and informal consent : when an elder is "*appointed* " there is nothing else he can be appointed to but the episcopate — the "*appointed elder* " is *ipso facto* a bishop.

It will be recognized that this last hypothesis is necessary to bring Sohm's view into accord with all the facts, particularly those which we encounter in the New Testament. To my mind it is the only view which is in complete harmony with the facts as we know them in the primitive age, and it has the additional advantage of

furnishing us with a starting-point which renders the subsequent development comprehensible. The general significance of this view has been illustrated in § 19.

Sohm turns first to the Epistle of Clement (*circa* A. D. 96) for confirmation of his view of the position of the elders in the primitive Church.<sup>15</sup> The occasion of this letter was the disorder which had arisen in the Church at Corinth. In c. 1 the former happy condition of this Church is described in the words: "ye walked after the ordinances of God, submitting yourselves to your rulers (ἡγουμένους) and rendering to the elder men among you (τοῖς παρ' ὑμῶν πρεσβυτέροις) the honor which is their due: on the young (νέους) too ye enjoined modest and seemly thoughts; and the women (γυναῖξί) ye charged to perform all their duties in a blameless and seemly and pure conscience." All the classes in the Church are here enumerated: the official leaders, to whom obedience is due (the incumbents of the teaching office are meant, here especially the bishops); the elders (not officers), to whom honor is due; the young men and the women, to whom instruction is due. The elders, like the young and the women, represent merely a natural class in the community: they enjoy a position of honor, but they hold no office.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to this, the present abnormal condition of the Church is described in c. 3: "men were stirred up (in Corinth), the mean against the honorable, those of no repute against the highly-reputed, the foolish against the wise, the young against the elder" (πρεσβυτέρους). It is evident that the same contrast is in view throughout. The Church is here thought of in its two principal divisions, the young and the old. We must understand as a matter of course that the "rulers" (teachers of various sorts, here especially

<sup>15</sup> Sohms, pp. 93 sqq.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Lightfoot *in loc.*

the bishops) are included in the class of the elders, the honored and distinguished portion of the community. But the elders in general, the elders as such, are not officers, but merely such members of the Church as are justly distinguished in honor and held in high repute for their mature wisdom and other personal characteristics. We may already deduce from this that the officers of the Church belong to the class of the elders, though the elders as such are not officers, but merely "the honorable, the highly-reputed, the wise." Later on in the epistle (c. 21) the Corinthians are admonished to restore again the right order in the Church: "Let us reverence our rulers; let us honor our elders; let us instruct our young men in the lesson of the fear of God; let us guide our women toward that which is good." Here we have again, as in the first passage, the complete enumeration of the four classes, and evidently in the same sense.

The other passages of the epistle correspond with this usage, as we might expect. The disturbance at Corinth is again spoken of (c. 47) as a revolt of the young against the "elders," and another passage (c. 57) again exhorts to obedience to the "elders." Here the word "elders" (*πρεσβυτέρους*) is used in the same sense as in the second passage quoted above: the elders include the "rulers" (the officers). Another passage (c. 44) speaks of the bishops, urging that they ought not without reason to be displaced from their office, and then adds: "Blessed are those elders (*πρεσβύτεροι*) who have gone before, seeing that their departure was fruitful and ripe: for they had no fear lest any one should remove them from their appointed place." It is clear that the bishops are here reckoned as elders; — not, however, because the elder (presbyter)

as such is a bishop, but because every bishop is an elder. This agrees with the conclusion we have already reached, that the bishops were chosen from that class of the community which were known as the elders. There remains one more passage which refers to the organization of the Corinthian Church (c. 54): "let the flock of Christ be at peace with the *appointed elders*." Who are the "appointed elders"? The elders in general are not appointed—any more than the young men and the women—but are a natural class in the community. The *appointed elders* must signify a smaller class within the general body of the elders. There cannot be the least doubt who is meant: the bishops are "appointed" (1 *Clem.* 42: 4; 44: 2, 3) and are at the same time reckoned among the elders, from whose ranks they are chosen. The *appointed elders*, who by their appointment are called to a definite official function, *are the bishops*.

Sohm finds still another passage in the Epistle of Clement which illustrates the character of the elders of the early Church—this time they are elders of the Roman Church. The last chapter of the epistle (c. 65) mentions by name three men who were sent by the Roman Church to carry the letter to the Corinthians, to establish peace in that Church, and to serve as "witness between you and us." In chapter 63 these men are described: they are *old men, from youth up they have belonged to the Roman Church*, they are *faithful and prudent*, and during all the long period of their Christian life they have earned the respect and confidence of the Church by their *blameless conduct*. Accordingly, they are old not only in years, but likewise in Christian experience; for their seniority is reckoned rather by the years of their membership in the Church,



than according to their natural age. There can be no doubt that these three men were elders in the ecclesiastical sense—that is to say, they were presbyters of the Roman Church. It goes without saying that they must have been men of importance who were sent upon such a mission, and the epistle expressly states that the sending of such men is a proof of the solicitude of the Roman Church for the restoration of peace. Who could they be but presbyters of the Roman Church? <sup>17</sup>

This brief description of the delegates of the Roman Church to the Corinthians has a high value for us, for in it we may read the marks which characterized a Roman presbyter about the end of the first century. It substantiates the conclusion we have already reached: one who was old in years, and at the same time ripe in Christian experience, long known in the community in which he lived, and approved by the blamelessness of his conduct, enjoyed the *honor* of an elder in the Church. Neither here nor in regard to the elders of the Corinthian Church is anything said of appointment to office, or of any consecration through the laying on of hands. It is important to note that these three delegates bear no official titles. If they had been bishops or deacons, their official title would surely have been mentioned, for that would have constituted for them an express legitimation as

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Lightfoot, *S. Clement of Rome*, vol. I. pp. 27 sqq., on the names of two of these "delegates," Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Bito, from which he argues that they were probably included among them "that are of Caesar's household," whose salutation St. Paul conveyed in his Epistle to the Philippians (4:22). It is to be noted that the third delegate, Fortunatus, is mentioned in such a way as suggests that he was not of the same rank as the others (c. 65, "Claudius Ephebus and Valerius Vito, together with Fortunatus also"), and it may be that he was a younger member attached to the mission.

delegates of the Roman Church. Being merely elders, however, they lack an official designation. "Presbyter" is not a title. The presbyter as such held no office, he was not even formally designated or appointed — otherwise the term "presbyter" would have been a formal title: the class of presbyters was still somewhat vague and undefined — like the class of the "young." There was no appointment to the presbyterate, but only to the episcopate (or diaconate): if the presbyter was appointed, he was appointed to the *episcopate*.

We get from the Epistle of Clement a perfectly consistent notion of the presbyters at the end of the first century, as well at Corinth as at Rome. Sohm justly lays stress upon the importance of this epistle, which emanated from the representative Church of Christendom, and was expressly designed to restore the Corinthian Church to its former order — the normal order, as the epistle evidently assumes, the order of all the Churches, and that by divine appointment through the Apostles.

We find this assumption substantiated when we turn to our other sources of information about the organization of the Church before the Catholic age. We learn from them on the one hand that the term "elder" denoted merely a natural class in the community, not an office; and on the other hand, in apparent contradiction to this, that there were *appointed elders* — of which more hereafter.

The first point is proved by the Epistle to the Philippians, inasmuch as it mentions only two offices, "bishops and deacons" (1 : 1), and no office of elder. Again, by the *Didache*, which enjoins it as a duty to "elect bishops and deacons," and says nothing about the election of

elders. The same is proved above all by the Pastoral Epistles. The First Epistle to Timothy deals in the third chapter with the *offices* of the Church and mentions only the bishop and deacons, concluding with the remark that this is the instruction about the order which is to be observed in the Ecclesia as the house of God. Nothing is said of the elders in connection with the offices of the Church; they are not mentioned before the fifth chapter, where Timothy's conduct towards the *individual members* of the community is regulated. Here (5: 1, 2) the natural classes in the community are distinguished as "old men" (*πρεσβυτέρω*) and "young men" (*νεωτέρους*), "old women" (*πρεσβυτέρας*) and "young women" (*νεωτέρας*).

Among the "old women," widows especially are considered (5: 3-16), and among these again a more limited class who are "widows indeed," *i. e.* such as deserve to be "enrolled" upon the official list of the beneficiaries of the Church offerings. The qualifications that entitle a widow to this honor are specified at length: she must be at least three-score years old; one who had been but once married, and during her married life had exemplified her Christian character in all sorts of good works; who is without means of support or kindred upon whom she can depend; and who is willing to devote herself constantly to prayer and to works of charity.

Among "the old men" (*πρεσβύτεροι*), likewise, there was a more limited class that deserved particular consideration. Just as among the widows that were such in a natural sense there were some that were also widows in the ecclesiastical sense, so among the old men there were some that were accounted *elders indeed*. The class of elders (or presbyters) who were such in the ecclesiasti-

cal sense was, however, less readily defined than the class that is described as "widows indeed." There was no formal mark by which they could be known: it was not prescribed that they must be widowers or single; not even a precise age limit was specified; and it does not appear that they were even enrolled. Yet they too were to receive a portion of the offerings, and indeed a double portion, — "double honor" it is called, that is, twice the portion of the widow.<sup>18</sup> Such men are vaguely described (1 Tim. 5: 17) as "the well-presiding elders,"<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Compare the third century *source* of Book II. of the Apostolic Constitutions, c. 28 (*i. e.* the part which corresponds with the Syrian *Didaskalia*): "How much soever is given (from the offerings) to each of the widows, let double as much be given to the deacons in honor of Christ; and if any one wishes to honor the presbyters also, let there be given a double portion to them, as to the deacons." The same regulation is recognizable in the Canons of Hippolytus, ix. §§ 58, 59.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Tim. 5: 17, 18, — "Let the elders ruling well (*οἱ καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι*) be counted worthy of double honor, especially those laboring in the word and in teaching. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer is worthy of his hire." Nothing is said of the elders who fail to merit such honor simply because they do nothing to fulfil the obligations, in the way of leadership and instruction, which naturally belong to their age and station. But *vv.* 19, 20 go on to speak of the elders who positively offend: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, except at the instance of two or three witnesses. Them that sin reprove in the sight of all, that the rest also may be in fear." This regulation does not indicate that the elders here spoken of are officers — as though the two or three witnesses required denoted an exception in their favor, a sort of benefit of clergy, — for it is simply the common rule enjoined by the Lord himself for all cases of judgment and discipline in the Ecclesia (Matt. 18: 15–17. Cf. above, p. 227). Indeed, we have here the proof that these elders were *not* officers. The question is, what to do about *sinning elders*. But according to the primitive conception, a *bad* bishop (or official presbyter) was no bishop at all: he ceased to be such the moment he fell into sin, for the sin was a sign that the charisma was lacking, and on that depended the office. Hence the early rule, that through mortal sin ecclesiastical office was *ipso facto* made void, — a rule, as is well known, to which the Roman bishop Callistus (219–223 *circa*) was the first to take exception. The seventeenth verse, about "the elders who rule well," as it is commonly translated, is the most prominent text adduced by the Presby-



*especially* those laboring in the word and in teaching." The vagueness of this description is the best proof that the elders were not officers with definite functions to discharge. Certain of the elders were entitled to receive a double portion of the offerings. Which were they? Those that performed with diligence the functions of leadership. What functions? The writer is

terians in support of their most distinctive institution, the "ruling elders": it has been worn threadbare in controversy with the English Church on the one hand, and with the Congregationalists on the other, while among Presbyterians themselves it has been as hotly disputed. Modern German writers are unanimous in explaining the *καλῶς προεστῶτες πρεσβύτεροι* as bishops. Sohni's interpretation (pp. 99-102) I give in the text. The phrase *καλῶς προεστῶτες* cannot be well rendered in English: wohl vorstehende Alte is a good German equivalent. The word does not necessarily denote the authority that is expressed in our word "ruling." Where definite functions are expressed (in the genitive) the word means no more than to be *occupied* with them, — cf. "to be occupied with good works," in Titus 3: 8, 14. In 1 Tim. 3: 4, 5, 12, where it is the *bishop's* authority which is the point of comparison, it signifies authoritative rule, as of a father over his family. But in general it denotes informal leadership, and may include the bishops as well as the elders, the older, as opposed to the younger members of the Church, — cf. 1 Thess. 5: 12. Presidency is in this case perhaps the best English equivalent, though it does not express the more active side of the notion. The elders did enjoy with the bishop the presidency at the Eucharistic table, *i. e.* the chief seats. This was *one* manifestation of the high regard in which they were held, and without doubt such a position implied a general leadership in Church affairs. The qualification expressed by *καλῶς* may best be interpreted by comparing it with *ἐν σπουδῇ* in Rom. 12: 8. Properly speaking, there was no precise criterion to determine whether the leadership which naturally belonged to the elder was *well* exercised or ill, — for this his functions were far too vague. The question could only be, whether in general he lived up to the responsibilities of his station, exercising oversight of the community, and performing such works as his hands found to do with *diligence* and *zeal*. One of the more definite functions, however, which an elder might be expected to perform was that of instruction, particularly in the case of the young and of the catechumens. Hence it is added, "*especially* those that labor in the word and in teaching." It was impossible to say exactly what might be expected of the elders: it depended upon their individual qualifications and personal influence, — hence the vagueness of the whole statement.

unable to define exactly, but one function occurs to him as the most important that an elder might be expected to perform, namely, that of teaching; — hence he adds, “*especially* those that labor in the word and in teaching.” “Especially”! The direction is still a very vague one. Not these alone, but only “especially” these. All of the elders who were zealous in the performance of their duties could not be expected to teach: they did not all have the capacity for it; and, besides, there were various other ways in which they could serve the Church. Therefore besides the elders that took part in the instruction there were others who were elders indeed and might be counted worthy of an elder’s honor. Who? The writer cannot say precisely. He is able to describe the class of persons which is here in question only by general phrases, not by any sharp definition. For the simple reason that “the well-presiding elders” are an indefinite class. There is no outward and formal criterion which constitutes one an elder indeed. The presbyters of the Epistle to Timothy — even those that are characterized as presiding well — were not officers, nor in any wise appointed. The name “presbyter” was not an official title, hence this name alone did not suffice to define the class of persons in question.

The bishops doubtless were *included* among the “well-presiding elders”: they too received a portion of the offerings, and in fact a double portion. But the number of “well-presiding elders” is greater than the number of the bishops, and hence the vagueness of the expression. The Epistle to Timothy agrees perfectly in this respect with the Epistle of Clement. The bishops were reckoned as elders, but the elders as such — even the elders in the ecclesiastical sense — were not

officials, nor "appointed" persons, but a necessarily indefinite group of the honorables of the community.

We find the same conception in Titus 2:2-6, where the various classes in the Church are reckoned as "old men" (*πρεσβύτες*), "old women," "young women," and "young men." And in the First Epistle of Peter,<sup>20</sup> where the apostle himself appears as a "fellow elder," and the Church is divided between the "elders" who "tend the flock of God," and the "young" whose part it is to "obey." The elder constitute the antithesis of the younger: neither is an official class, and consequently the elders as such are not "appointed," any more than are the younger. However, the officials of the Church, including the apostles (who were, of course, in point of Christian experience the oldest members in the community), were included among the elders; and it could therefore be said of the elders in general — what was properly and in the fullest sense true only of the incumbents of the teaching office — that they "tend the flock of God," — and all the more so because to "preside" and to "exercise oversight" was the duty of *all* elders.

But we find at the same time, in apparent contradiction to the above, that there were also *appointed elders*. We read in the Acts of the Apostles (14:23) that Paul and Barnabas, returning from their first missionary journey and revisiting the Churches which they had planted, "appointed for them *elders* in every Church, praying with fasting." The Acts speaks again (20:17, 28) of "elders" of the Church at Ephesus who

<sup>20</sup> 1 Pet. 5:1, 2, 5, "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder. . . . Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight. . . . Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder (*πρεσβυτέρους*)."

were "appointed" (ἔθετο) by the Holy Ghost (*i. e.* by prophecy) to shepherd (ποιμαίνειν) the Church of God." In the Epistle to Titus also we find the injunction to the evangelist to "appoint elders in every city," followed by the qualifications which must be demanded of such appointees (1:5, 6). But the apparent contradiction is at once resolved when we read further (*vv.* 7-9) that these and other qualifications are necessary "because *the bishop* must be blameless, as God's steward." It is clear that the "appointment" of the elders is *not* an appointment to the office of elder (presbyter), but to the office of bishop. We find precisely the same thing in the second passage cited from the Acts, which reads in full: "the Holy Ghost hath appointed you (the Ephesian elders) bishops, to feed the Church of God." The election of an elder (through prophecy with the assent of the Church) is an election, *not* to the presbyterate, but to the episcopate. We are accordingly justified in interpreting the first passage from the Acts (14:23) as an appointment of elders to the office of bishop. All this is precisely in accord with what we discovered in the Epistle of Clement.

There are, it is true, some other passages in which "elders" are mentioned in such a way as affords us no grounds for a definite conclusion about their character and functions. This is the case especially with the "elders" of the Church at Jerusalem which are mentioned in the Acts;<sup>21</sup> and of the "elders" of the Epistle of St. James, who are to be called for to pray over the sick.<sup>22</sup> But on the other hand there is nothing here which gives us occasion to alter the above interpretation. From

<sup>21</sup> Acts 11:30; 15:2, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; 21:18.

<sup>22</sup> James 5:14.



our point of view there is nothing strange in the influential part assigned to the "elders" of the Jerusalem Church in the apostolic council,<sup>23</sup> or in the fact that "all the elders" were gathered together in the house of James.<sup>24</sup> In Jerusalem as elsewhere the elders were the most prominent and influential members of the community. It is somewhat different, however, when we read in Acts 11:30 that the contributions of the Gentiles for the relief of the Jerusalem poor were sent "to the elders," for here the administration of Church property is evidently ascribed to them. It is possible that here and in other passages in the Acts the bishops (who were certainly included among the elders) are referred to simply by this title; and the same may be the meaning in the Epistle of St. James, where the sick are told to send for the elders of the Church to pray over them. On this point, however, a sure conclusion is hardly to be reached. Only this is sure, — and it is of importance also for the interpretation of the passages relative to the Jerusalem elders, — that the Acts, too, expressly characterizes the appointed presbyters as *bishops*. And so both in the Acts and in the Pastoral Epistles we find confirmation of the conclusion which we derived from the Epistle of Clement, that in the first century there was no appointment to the position of presbyter, but only appointment of presbyters to the episcopate.<sup>25</sup>

The foregoing digression upon the subject of elders was necessary at this point in order to throw into just relief the importance of the fact that the bishop was

<sup>23</sup> Acts 15:2, 6, 22, 23.

<sup>24</sup> Acts 21:18.

<sup>25</sup> A contrary inference is drawn from all of these passages (viz. that *πρεσβύτερος* is an official title and *ἐπίσκοπος* is merely a descriptive one) by Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, 1900, pp. 98, 99, 190 sqq., 211 sqq.

chosen on principle from the ranks of the elders.<sup>26</sup> We have now to inquire, What significance has this fact for the character of the bishop's office?

The question is this: Does the bishop belong to the charismatic organization of the Church, and what is his charisma? It is now evident that we may resolve this question into another form which admits of a readier answer: Have the *elders* a charisma, and what is it? For not only are the bishops chosen from the ranks of the elders, but the qualifications required of a bishop are no other than those which constitute an *elder indeed*.

That the elders were regarded as charismatically endowed, admits of no doubt. For the charisma is the necessary expression of the Holy Ghost which dwells in the believer. Every Christian must have his own particular gift, his own individual contribution to the perfection of the body of which he is a member. There are consequently "diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." Some gifts appear more useful, some more honorable than others; but all are necessary to the body, and God hath so tempered the body together that he hath given more abundant honor to that which lacked honor, *i. e.* to the members which perform the lowly, serviceable functions of the body. These gifts (*charismata*) are too various to be completely enumerated, and too individual to be classified in detail. But we may distinguish broadly between the gift of teaching in its various sorts; and the gift of ministry, the practical exercise and proof of Christian character, which is at least no less various in its

<sup>26</sup> In note 67 on p. 107 Sohm remarks on various exceptions to this rule in a later age, but he adduces many interesting instances of the observance of the rule in the second and third centuries.

manifestations.<sup>27</sup> The teaching gift is the highest in Christendom: those that possess it are "the honored" members of the Church. But the practical gifts of ministry are no less necessary to the body of Christ; and it is one of the most characteristic features of Christianity that service (ministry) is exalted, while mastery is abased.<sup>28</sup> It is thus that God gives to the uncomely parts more abundant honor.

We have already seen that it was not the teaching gift that constituted the equipment for the episcopate: the episcopate must accordingly rest upon the other charisma, the gift of loving ministry,—and this all the more because, next to the presidency of the Eucharist, the care of the poor constituted the bishop's most important function. Here lies the significance of the fact that the bishop was chosen on principle from among the elders. The characteristics which distinguished the "elders indeed" were precisely those which were required of the bishop. The charisma of the elder is the gift of proving a practical and consistent Christianity. How high a gift! The qualities which are required of all Christians are manifested

<sup>27</sup> The *whole* of Rom. 12:6-21 is intended as an illustration of the diversity of gifts mentioned in v. 6. Even in vv. 6-8 (which alone, according to the common notion, are supposed to exhaust this theme) we find not only gifts of teaching mentioned (viz. prophecy, teaching, exhortation), but the gift, if we may so call it, of practical Christianity, — zealous ministry, liberal giving, diligence in fulfilling the functions of presidency (*προϊστάμενος*), showing mercy with cheerfulness. Following this we find, among other practical manifestations of Christian character, love without hypocrisy, diligence in business, patience in tribulation, steadfastness in prayer, communicating to the necessities of the saints, given to hospitality, etc.

<sup>28</sup> Compare especially Luke 22:26, 27. Cf. also 1 Cor. 16:15, 16, "Now I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have *laid themselves out to minister unto the saints*), that ye also be in *subjection* unto such, and to *every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth*."

in an extraordinary degree in the elders, who besides have proved the steadfastness of their character by a long life in Christ. The elders therefore have an extraordinary measure of the Spirit: hence they are reckoned among the "spiritual" and enjoy an eminence in the Church like that of the teachers.

In the second century and earlier we find other persons in the Church who rank with the presbyters and resemble them in character, namely, the widows, the ascetics, and the martyrs (confessors). They too are distinguished for the practical proof of their Christianity. In the second and third centuries the bishops were drawn from the ascetics and martyrs just as they were from the presbyters—indeed the former were preferred.<sup>29</sup> The bishop is chosen from among the spiritual persons of the community. When the assembly lacks a man who is distinguished for the gift of teaching (a "spiritual" in the highest sense), then *another* spiritual disciple takes his place, according to his rank in the assembly, to preside over the Eucharist and administer God's property,—namely, a martyr, or an ascetic, or—and this is the rule—an elder. Such is the origin of the episcopate.

Ascetics and martyrs are not always to be found in the assembly, any more than apostles, prophets, and teachers; but presbyters in the sense above defined there must be in every congregation which has been some time established,—if indeed it deserves the name of a Church.

The gift which serves to single out the bishop is the gift of love; yet, as has been already shown, he is called to exercise an office which requires on principle the teaching gift. He performs the service of

<sup>29</sup> For instances see Sohm, p. 110, notes 71, 72.



the "prophets and teachers." How is that to be explained?

It is impossible to think of a genuine gift of teaching which is not combined with a practical manifestation of Christian character. He would be a poor teacher of God's word whose life did not correspond with his precepts. The gift of teaching must manifest itself in conjunction with the gift of love. Similarly in the other case: the gift of love does not as such include the gift of teaching; but one who has proved himself in *deed* a true Christian has naturally a good repute, and finds a ready reception for his teaching in the Church. When a man manifests the spirit of Christ in his life, his word too counts as an expression of the true Christian spirit. We see this plainly in the case of the martyrs. Of course the martyr as such had by no means a teaching gift; yet his word counted in the Church as equivalent to that of the prophets and teachers, because "Christ is in him."<sup>30</sup> The case of the elder was similar: in the presbyter the spirit of Christ is effectually operative, as is proved by his whole life; and hence it is that his word and teaching have authority in the Church. The presbyter cannot speak with the authority of the apostolic teachers, for he has not the apostolic gift. But he has the gift of love, and that gives also weight to his words.

The episcopal teaching office is the *opposite* of the apostolical.<sup>31</sup> The bishops are equipped for their office,

<sup>30</sup> Cf. above, p. 236, note 22.

<sup>31</sup> The prescribed formula of Eucharistic prayer is a consequence of the fact that the bishop was *not* equipped with the gift of teaching, and yet had to perform this function of prayer in place of the prophets and teachers, as a part—and indeed the most essential part—of the administration of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic prayers preserved in the

not by the teaching gift, in the specific sense of the word, but by the gift of love: they have not the gift which belongs to the apostles, prophets, and teachers; yet they are informed by the spirit of Christ, and have therefore the vocation and ability to bear witness also by their word and teaching to the nature and requirements of true Christianity. Hence it is that, when no gifted teacher (apostle, prophet, teacher) is to be found in the community, the bishop takes the place of the prophets and teachers; and hence it is too that the bishop who thus appears as a substitute for the prophets and teachers is chosen from the ranks of the elders (or ascetics, or confessors).

Besides this, we must bear in mind the fact that the extraordinary gift of teaching which belonged to the apostles and prophets was not the only sort of teaching in the Church. Alongside of it there was a more usual sort of ministry of the word which was common in a measure to all Christians. This has not the exalted authority of the other. It does not pretend to add any new teaching or ordinance, but only to develop and apply the implications of the word which has been received and appropriated, and to pass on the Christian message unadulterated to another generation. This sort of instruction is inseparable from the conception of an "elder." By whom shall the new converts and the younger members of the Church be instructed in the Christian faith and in the Christian life if not by the elders? In this field there is a constant need for

*Didache* (ix., x.) are evidently much older than this document. These prayers were for the use of the bishops (men who did not possess the gift of teaching), and for the prophets and teachers it is expressly provided (x. 7) that they shall be allowed "to give thanks as much as they will." All this is strikingly in accord with the view presented in the text. Cf. Sohm, p. 113, note 75.

instruction, and the apostolic gift of teaching was ever rare in the Church. It is evident that the need of a substitute for the prophets and teachers was not first felt at the end of the second century when the charismatic ministry began to disappear: it was an early and a constant need, and the elders were ever the natural substitutes. The older members of the Church — in particular the elders in the ecclesiastical sense — were the natural teachers of the young, and above all of the catechumens. Hence in the Pastoral Epistles we already find the elders exercising this function. The elders who “labor in word and in teaching” are the older and more respected members of the congregation, through whom the catechumens receive their instruction. It is chiefly in this way that they fulfil the obligations of their presidency (*καλῶς προεστῶτες*). For this no prophetic gift is needed, and no teaching gift in the specific sense: it is enough that one be a true and approved Christian. Out of this common-Christian sort of teaching, the instruction of the younger by the elder (think, for example, of the catechetical school of Alexandria!), has come our Christian theology.

From such elders the bishop is regularly chosen. The thought is that the bishop, too, has a vocation to admonish and instruct the Church, though he is selected in the first place for his practical piety rather than for his teaching gifts. So the episcopate is a teaching office, — and that from the very first. In this function, as well as in the administration of the Eucharist and of Church property, the bishop appears as a substitute for the apostolic teachers. Here we have a starting-point which renders the whole subsequent history of the episcopate intelligible; and at the same time we have a

verification of the thesis that no Church government or administration can be thought of apart from the ministry of the word (p. 238).

The prevailing view claims that there was a *double* organization in the early Church: on the one hand the charismatic officers (apostles, prophets, teachers), officers of the Church at large, whose function was teaching: on the other hand, the congregational officers (bishops, presbyters, and deacons), whose status was purely a legal one, and whose functions were originally confined to government and administration. We have seen reason to challenge this view at almost every point, and to modify, if not out and out to deny, the various antitheses which it postulates. It has already been shown that the antithesis between teaching and administration is a modern one, which did not exist at all for the early Church. Here we see that such an antithesis has in fact no application to the episcopate. The contrast is a great one between the apostle and the bishop: it is not, however, a contrast between teaching and administration, but between different sorts of teaching. The charismatic officers were the administrators of the Church as well as teachers — or rather because they were teachers. The bishops too were teachers as part and parcel of their administrative activity. The two organizations were radically different with respect to the character of their equipment, but their functions were the same, the lower ministry being designed to serve *in its measure* as a substitute for the higher.

The distinction between *charismatic* and *legal* equally fails to characterize the point of difference between the apostolic ministry and the episcopate. The election and ordination of the bishop had no other significance than the election and ordination of an apostle or an



evangelist. The bishop had no *legal right* to the administration of the Eucharist, any more than had the apostle or prophet. This is shown by the fact that the bishop had to give place to any charismatic officer that might be present in the assembly.<sup>32</sup> Nor might he assert a *legal* claim to the privileges of his office, even when no representative of this higher ministry was present. This is not to say that the Christian communities were under no moral obligation to reverence, obey, and cherish their officers (whether apostles and prophets, or bishops), and to continue them in the office which they worthily exercise. This is substantially the position maintained by St. Clement in his Epistle to the Corinthians. He does not affirm that even the orderly appointment of the bishops by the apostles (or, in turn, by the apostles' appointees) gave them a legal claim upon their office; but he affirms that *on the part of the congregation* it would be no light sin to thrust out those who had worthily exercised the functions of their episcopate. Unlike Sohm, who regards this letter as a presage, if not an expression of the Catholic notion of the ministry, I can find here no hint of Catholic legality.

<sup>32</sup> Sohm (pp. 116, 119) adds, that where there were several bishops in one Church no one of them could claim an exclusive right over the Eucharist. This may be a correct inference from the plurality of bishops; but, for my part, I find it difficult to conceive that such a state of affairs could have existed without disorder. The bishop's principal function (the presidency of the Eucharist) was one which could neither be shared, nor exercised at one time by the whole body of bishops in common: if several officers were recognized as equally authorized to perform this function in the same assembly, they must have presided in rotation; and it is impossible to imagine any plan of rotation which would not involve serious inconveniences. If such an arrangement ever existed, it was certainly not conducive to settled order, and it was evidently not destined to last. It seems to me more probable that the plurality of bishops corresponded to a plurality of assemblies, which were more or less definitely distinguished.

This is no more than must have been affirmed from the earliest days of the Church, if peace and order were to be maintained in the body of Christ. A serious fallacy — and one which has long passed unchallenged as an axiom — asserts that every duty implies a corresponding right. This is true only within the sphere of positive law : duties which the legislator defines express at the same time corresponding rights. Outside this sphere we can form no definite conception of rights, and it is never profitable to consider them. Conscience tells us nothing about rights, it knows only of personal duties, and on this subject it speaks directly and imperatively. To imagine that the duty exacted by conscience presupposes as its logical *prius*, as the very reason and ground of its existence, a *right* which may be claimed by another, is to misinterpret the character of conscience, and to ignore an important psychological fact. I may feel it my duty to share my cloak with the beggar, but nothing will so soon dry up the springs of compassion as to find the beggar demanding the half of my cloak as his *right*. I suppose that the Corinthian congregation might be admonished as to its duties towards the bishops, without implying on the part of the latter a *right* to claim undisturbed possession of their privileges. But at all events, their rights, if rights they had, were not legal, but moral rights.

My interpretation of the character of the episcopal office excludes, more thoroughly even than does that of Sohlm, the notion of an episcopal college. So far as I am aware, every one except Sohlm assumes as a matter of course that the several bishops in a community constituted a college or committee for the administration

of Church affairs.<sup>33</sup> It is assumed that the "bishops" mentioned in our sources signify of course a *college* of bishops. As though these two conceptions were equivalent! Why this common delusion? Simply because every one assumes as a matter of course that the organization of the Church was a legal organization. Given a plurality of bishops in the same congregation, it may well be thought that we must conceive of them as constituting a corporate body, a college, or committee, if we are to suppose that there was any unity of administration, any closed and compact form of legal organization. But this conception is one for which we have not a shred of evidence in our sources. It stands indeed in the sharpest contradiction to primitive principles, and, so far from explaining the early constitution of the Church, it involves us in the greatest difficulties. If at the head of the congregation there was a "college of bishops," how is it possible to explain the transformation of this college into the single bishop of the subsequent age? Indeed, how is it possible to introduce the notion of a *college* into the sphere of primitive Christian thought? Had the "college of bishops" any charisma? Was it divinely endowed and equipped for any ministry in Christendom? Can we even call it

<sup>33</sup> Sohm, in note 78 to p. 116, cites the views of Hatch, Löning, Harnack, Weizsäcker, etc., to this effect. He remarks at the end of this note, that, on the basis of this assumption of a collegial body at the head of the Church, the development of the monarchical episcopate is generally so explained as to attribute to the "president" of this group (the "first of the bishops," as Weizsäcker calls him) the same rôle as that of a president in a republic who is on the way to acquire royal power and prerogative. He observes that this construction of history is as old as Jerome; but he affirms justly that as yet no one has been able to give a comprehensible account of such a process, — not to speak of a clear conception of such a development. The remainder of this paragraph I translate almost literally from Sohm, p. 117.

a member of the body of Christ? Impossible! The mere fact that the "college of bishops" is not a Christian, not a *person* at all in a real sense, but only as a legal fiction; that as a corporation it can possess no gift of the Holy Ghost (for they are personal gifts); is enough to prove that the "college of bishops" has no place in the primitive organization which was founded upon the charisma; —and no more had the "college of elders," or the "college of apostles." In pre-Catholic Christendom colleges can possess no sort of authority or function, because they lack the charisma, which is the presupposition for every activity in and for the Church. How is it possible to attribute to such a representative council, administrative board, or college, a legal authority which the whole local assembly of Christians as such (that is, as a corporation) does not possess? What any assembly is empowered to do, it can do only as an assembly of the whole of Christendom (pp. 138 sq.), and even in this character it can itself perform no service for the Kingdom of God (and so neither teach nor govern), but only testify by its concordant witness that in the personal activity of the individual God's gifts are truly and effectually manifested. The charisma is never given to an assembly, not even to the assembly of Christendom (the *body* of Christ), but only to the individual Christians (the *members* of Christ), and that for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ, — to comfort and establish the Church, to teach, guide, and rule it.

For this reason the Church organization of primitive times was *apt* to produce a *monarchical* form of government, when a legal constitution came about. For the same reason, in pre-Catholic times, every assembly as such, the assembly of the congregation as well as the



assembly of bishops and presbyters, was excluded from all authority to teach or govern in its own right. There could be neither a democratic regiment of the congregational assembly, nor an aristocratic regiment represented by the "college" of bishops and presbyters in the sense of the traditional view. Indeed, there can be no such organization of the Ecclesia — now or ever.

The election of bishops was only a step towards the legal organization of the Church. Christianity was not legally defined, there was still no congregation with legal organization, so long as *every* assembly was regarded as an assembly of Christendom — *ubi tres, ibi ecclesia* — whether a bishop was present or not, and was consequently deemed capable of performing every function of the Ecclesia, including Baptism and the Eucharist, election and ordination. The principal assembly enjoyed no exclusive authority: it had a *de facto* preponderance merely. It was first the thesis of Ignatius which was designed to change all this, seeking to establish, — not the episcopate, nor even the single episcopate, for this already existed, but — an exclusive congregational system. The sentence of Ignatius sounded: without the bishop and the presbytery and the deacons — that is, apart from the organized principal assembly — there is no Ecclesia.

## § 22, DEACONS

The word *διακονία* is used broadly in the New Testament to indicate any service rendered to the Church; — it describes the service even of an apostle or of a bishop.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The apostolate is called a *διακονία* (*e. g.* in Rom. 11:13; 1 Cor. 3:5) as well as an *ἐπισκοπή* (Acts 1:17, 20). In Acts 6:2, 4 the apostolic diaconia of the word is contrasted with the more material service — the diaconia of tables — to which the Seven were appointed. Espe-

It denotes, however, more particularly the subordinate service of the deacon.

Like the episcopal office, the office of deacon owed its existence to the Eucharist. In this relation the bishop's function was that of presidency, the deacon's that of service,—in the strictest sense of the word. The bishop's office in each assembly was consequently occupied by a single individual, while the number of deacons was indefinite. Hence in 1 Tim. 3:2 it was natural to speak of "the bishop" in the singular, and equally natural to speak of the "deacons" in the plural (*v.* 8). The deacon's service was a menial one, particularly while the Eucharist was associated with the agape. But all service was accounted honorable in the Church and recognized as a ground of personal honor and authority. Moreover the deacon's service at the Eucharistic feast carried with it important practical duties outside the assembly, especially the duty of *assisting* the bishop in the distribution of the Church property.<sup>2</sup> We may suppose that where there were several bishops in a community, each had his own proper deacons. The relation of the bishop to his deacons was a very close one. It was a relation of personal trust and fidelity. The deacon's service was rendered to his bishop

cially significant is the use of the word in 1 Cor. 16:15, where the *diaconia* which Stephanas and his household have laid themselves out to render to the Church, is accounted a ground for holding them in superior honor. The episcopate, too, is a *diaconia* (Hermas, *Sim.* ix. 27: the bishops help the needy *τῇ διακονίᾳ ἐαυτῶν*. Ignatius, *Philad.* 1: the bishop has "the ministry of the common weal." Euseb. *H. E.* V. 1:29: "the *diaconia* of the episcopate"). Cf. Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 202 sqq., for an interesting discussion of this word.

<sup>2</sup> 1 *Clem. ad Cor.* 44: because the apostles foresaw the strife over the episcopate (that is, the administration of the Eucharist, *δῶρα προσφέρειν*), they appointed bishops and deacons (*τοὺς προειρημένους*, cf. c. 42:4) and made over to them for their lifetime the *ἐπινομή*, *i. e.* the administration (distribution) of the offerings,—cf. p. 332, note 3.

personally, as well as to the Church.<sup>3</sup> This close association with the bishop is one of the factors which account for the ever increasing influence and importance of the deacons. They advanced in dignity *pari passu* with the bishop, and it even became a question, in the second century and later, whether deacons or presbyters were the more considerable officers.

At first, while the Eucharist and the agape were united, the deacons alone stood and ministered, while all the disciples sat at the table with the bishop and the presbyters who presided with him. The subsequent development which separated the people from the Holy Table, at which the bishop and presbyters alone continued to sit, could not fail to enhance the dignity of the deacons; for though they continued to *stand* as before, they nevertheless were reckoned among those that enjoyed a place of privilege at the altar,—the clergy as they were later called.

The service which the deacons rendered at the Eucharistic feast is one which must have been needed from the beginning, just as a president of the feast was required in the very nature of the case. But the *office* of deacon appears to have originated contemporaneously with the episcopate. The deacons are first mentioned in Phil. 1:1, which is also the earliest passage that refers to bishops. The bishops, who are mentioned first, are evidently the superior officers. The diaconate is an adjunct of the episcopate. Hence in the Epistle of Clement, where the appointment of both bishops and deacons is spoken of (c. 42), we hear

<sup>3</sup> Hence the warm tone in which Ignatius speaks of his σύνδουλοι (*e. g.* in *Ephes.* 2, *Magn.* 2) and ἐμοὶ γλυκύτατοι (*Magn.* 6). — For the various offices which the deacons performed as the bishop's helpers both in the assembly and without it, see Sohm, p. 127, note 25.

only of "a strife over the episcopate" (c. 44), not of a strife over the diaconate. And hence, too, the deacon is sometimes ignored in speaking of appointment to Church offices.<sup>4</sup> But in general bishops and deacons are mentioned together. In the *Didache* (xv.) deacons as well as bishops are said to "perform the service of the prophets and teachers" (*i. e.* the administration of the Eucharist and the Church property), and to deserve the same "honor" in the Church as these charismatic officers. From this it appears that the deacons were *not* chosen from among the gifted teachers, but were, like the bishops, appointed as substitutes for them.<sup>5</sup>

The fact that the deacons shared to a large extent the functions which the bishop exercised, explains the

<sup>4</sup> Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Sohm remarks that this fact confutes the widely current notion which sees the pattern and origin of the diaconate in the Seven who were appointed in the early days of the Church at Jerusalem to "serve tables" (Acts 6:1 sqq.). For the Seven were men who were distinguished for the apostolic teaching gift — "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," — whereas the deacons were *substitutes* for the gifted teachers. Furthermore, nothing is said in the Acts of any subordination of the Seven to the apostles in the matter of administering the gifts, whereas the deacons appear from first to last as mere helpers of the bishops. The first express notice we have of this interpretation is in Cyprian (*ep.* 168) and the *Canons of Hippolytus* (v. § 39); but it is implied in the practice of the Roman Church, which from the third century onward persisted in limiting the number of deacons to seven. According to Harnack, *Texte* II. 5, p. 92, note 70, p. 97, note 88, the subdiaconate was established at Rome in the third or fourth decade of the third century, which proves that the interpretation which regarded the Seven as the original deacons, flourished, in Rome at least, before the end of the second century. Apparently this theory of the Seven hangs together with the theory of the apostolical succession of the bishops. If the Roman bishop were the successor of the apostles (Peter and Paul), the Roman deacons, too, must be successors of the Seven who were appointed by the apostles as their helpers. Thus the Roman Church reflected precisely the apostolic order of government! Sohm remarks that we have no notice of a similar Roman theory of the presbyterate.



requisition of substantially the same qualifications in both.<sup>6</sup> Both are engaged in the administration of the Eucharist and of the Church property.<sup>7</sup>

Yet the deacons do not share in all the bishop's functions — *e. g.* that of presidency, — and even where the functions are the same the bishop and the deacons stand in different relations to them. Hence the qualifications of the two are not in all points the same. The bishop was a superior officer, he it was who represented the Church in dealings with those that are without; and

<sup>6</sup> The Epistle of Clement sums up the qualifications of both bishops and deacons in the general requisition that they be "approved" men; and so too the *Didache* demands of both alike that they be "worthy of the Lord, gentle, not lovers of money, true and approved." Cf. p. 342, note 13. The other sources mention the qualifications of the deacons separately, yet substantially in the same terms. The third century source of *Apost. Const.* III. c. 15 states expressly that the deacons shall be like the bishops, "only more sturdy," — as those that have to be the medium of the bishop in much of his intercourse with the members of his congregation.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Tim. 3: 8, 12, "Deacons *in like manner* must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre. Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well." Polycarp, *ad Phil.* 5, substantially repeats these requirements (except the last), adding that the deacon must be "temperate in all things, compassionate, diligent." Source A of *Apost. Church Order*, c. 4, "They shall be approved in every service, well reputed in the congregation, living with one wife, taking care of their children, prudent, gentle, quiet, not murmurers, not double-tongued, not inclined to anger, not accepting the persons of the rich, nor oppressing the poor, not using much wine, active, encouraging ably to the hidden works, in that they oblige the well-to-do among the brethren to open their hands, themselves also liberal, sympathetic, honored by the people of the congregation with all honor and reverence and fear, giving diligent heed to them that behave unruly, admonishing some, exhorting others, etc." Source B of *Apost. Church Order*, c. 6, "Deacons, workers of good works, watching everywhere day and night, neither despising the poor nor accepting the person of the rich, shall know the afflicted and not exclude them from a share in the Church collections, but they shall oblige the people of means to lay up treasure unto good works, having in mind the words of our Teacher: 'Thou sawest me an hungered and fed me not.'"

by his conduct the Church itself was likely to be judged. The same was not true of the deacon.<sup>8</sup> The high office of bishop can easily lead to pride, and hence no novice must be appointed: whereas in the case of the deacon no such precept is given,<sup>9</sup> because no such danger attached to their office.

The bishop must have a certain capacity for teaching and exhortation,<sup>10</sup> but no such requirement is made of the deacon. The character of the service which the deacon rendered (in the earlier time especially) seems to demand that he be chosen from the younger members of the Church, while the bishop was chosen from among the "elders," the honorables and natural leaders of the community.<sup>11</sup> It is expressly provided, however, that the deacon who approves himself in his position may hope to attain later the higher rank of bishop.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The bishop "must have good testimony from them that are without" (1 Tim. 3:7); he must have "a good reputation among the heathen" (Source A of *Apost. Ch. O.*); whereas it is required of the deacon merely that he be "well reputed by the people of the congregation" — *παρὰ τοῦ πλήθους*.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Tim. 3:6 sqq.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9.

<sup>11</sup> While Source A of the *Apost. Ch. Order* desires that the bishop be either unmarried or "a widower of one wife," it is required of deacons that they be *μονόγαμοι*. Apparently the bishop is regarded as the elder of the two—likely already widowed; while the deacon is supposed to be living still in the married state. In 1 Tim. 3:2, 12 it is required of the bishop and deacon alike that they be "the husband of one wife"; but only of the bishop is it said that he must be "no neophyte." The passage cited above in note 6 from the *Apost. Const.* requires that the deacon shall be like the bishop, "only more sturdy."

<sup>12</sup> This notice, so highly significant for the nature of the diaconate, is found in 1 Tim. 3:13, "For they that have served well as deacons gain for themselves a good degree" (*βαθμὸν*), and in Source B of the *Apost. Ch. Order*, c. 6, "For they that have served well and blamelessly as deacons gain for themselves the pastoral place" (*τόπον τὸν ποιμενικόν*). On this see Harnack, *Texte* II. 5, p. 26, note 15; and Holtzmann, *Pastoral-briefe*, pp. 240, 323.

Sohm calls attention to a fact of singular importance which has lately been recognized by several German scholars, viz. that the deacon had to pass through a *period of probation*.<sup>13</sup> It is not possible to think of such a requirement in the case of the bishop,—any more than in the case of apostles, prophets, and teachers. The bishop must be an “approved” man, and the prophet an “approved” prophet;<sup>14</sup> but the *proving* that is here contemplated consists merely in an opinion passed upon the *previous* character of the man and his actual attainments,—an opinion which is established by the divine testimony, through prophecy. The deacon, too, is called through prophecy.<sup>15</sup> His standing also is determined by the proof of his antecedent character and conduct. But for him a further proof is required

<sup>13</sup> This is indicated in 1 Tim. 3:10, — καὶ αὐτοὶ δὲ (the deacons,—the δὲ expresses the contrast with the bishops, to whom the same rule is *not* applied) δοκιμασέσθωσαν πρῶτον, εἶτα διακονείτωσαν ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες. Cf. Holtzmann, *Pastoralbriefe*, p. 240. A *period* of probation is clearly expressed in the πρῶτον, εἶτα. In Source A of the *Apost. Ch. Order*, c. 4, it is said of the deacons: ἔστωσαν δεδοκιμασμένοι πάσῃ διακονίᾳ, — i. e. it is expressly required that before their final appointment they must have been active in every sort of ministry belonging to the diaconate. So here likewise a probation is prescribed.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. above, p. 342, note 13. *Didache*, xi. 11, πᾶς δὲ προφήτης δεδοκιμασμένος. In the appointment of the bishop, too, a *dokimasia* is necessary (Source A of *Apost. Ch. Order*, c. 1, δοκιμασῇ δοκιμάσαντες τὸν ἄξιον ὄντα), but not in the form of a probation.

<sup>15</sup> 1 *Clem.* 42: the apostles appointed bishops and deacons, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι. Clemens Alex. *Quis dives salvetur*, c. 42: (the Apostle John) “here appointing bishops, and there organizing whole Churches, and in another place electing to the clerus one and another of those who were indicated *by the Spirit*.” These last must be presbyters and deacons, since the bishops have been already mentioned. We must assume that in this case as usual the appointment through prophecy required the assent of the congregation as a witness to its genuineness (cf. 1 *Clem.* 44: 3, συνευδοκίας τῆς ἐκκλησίας πάσης; and Source A of *Apost. Ch. Order*, c. 4, μεμαρτυρημένοι παρὰ τοῦ πλήθους). For this reason the people continued as late as the third century to participate even in the conferring of minor orders,—cf. note 16.

during a period of probation.<sup>16</sup> His appointment denotes that he is put on trial, and only when he has approved himself in the exercise of his diaconate does he earn fully the office and honor of a deacon. This implies that the deacon is regarded as a person in the process of development. The bishop is a mature man ("elder"), already long approved, the deacon is still immature (one of the "younger"), who needs to be further tested, and who just for that reason is called to a position of subordinate service. It implies further that the diaconate is not regarded merely as a service, but at the same time as a school for persons who are in the process of development. In rendering his subordinate service, the deacon has at the same time an opportunity to exercise and cultivate his own spiritual charisma, and with ripened gifts he may himself become fitted for the episcopate. In a word, the *ordines minores* of the future are adumbrated in the diaconate. This is true as well of the form of induction (through probation), as of the nature of the office: the diaconate is a call to purely subordinate and ministerial functions, and yet to func-

<sup>16</sup> In point of time the probation followed the prophecy and appointment. This is showed plainly at a later period by the relation of the congregational resolution (the accompaniment of prophecy) to the action of the bishop in conferring minor orders. He who is nominated to the office of lector or subdeacon (appointment to the subdiaconate was doubtless modelled after that to the diaconate) had to pass through a probation, — cf. Source A of *Apost. Ch. Order*, c. 4; and *Cypr. ep.* 39. The resolution, however, which expressed the assent of the clergy and congregation was required at the time of *entrance* upon this probation. The conclusive appointment after probation required merely the assent of the clergy, not again that of the congregation, — *Cypr. ep.* 29, 38, 39, 40. O. Ritschl, *Cyprian*, pp. 169–172. The position of the congregational resolution shows what was originally the place of the prophecy (with assent of the people); and so the first resolution of the bishop and clergy (with assent of the congregation) was the appointment proper. The appointment to one of the minor orders was an appointment with *subsequent* trial by probation.



tions which are regarded at the same time as a *preparation* for the independent administration of the teaching office — the priesthood.

K. *The Minor Orders.* Sohm gives his theory of the *ordines minores* as an "Anhang" (pp. 128-137) to the section on Deacons. This is a subject which has been discussed at considerable length by Harnack (*Texte*, II. 5, pp. 57-103) as a supplement to his investigation of *Die Quellen der sogenannten apostolischen Kirchenordnung*. This whole work has been rendered into English under the misleading title *Sources of The Apostolic Canons* (London, 1895), and with a bulky and superfluous Introduction by the translator. Sohm agrees with many of Harnack's conclusions. Like him, he attributes the institution of the minor orders to the beginning of the third century, and refers it to Rome, which he considers the center from which the whole Catholic organization was developed. He recognizes, too, the justice of Harnack's contention that the minor orders were not all of them a mere development of the diaconate, as the prevalent view had maintained. For Harnack has made it clear that the offices of lector and exorcist were early offices in the Church, founded each upon a particular and personal charisma. But they were originally lay offices, and the development of the third century consisted merely in ranking the lector and exorcist, together with the door-keeper (*ostiarius*), among the clergy.

Sohm emphatically disagrees, however, with Harnack's view of the minor orders as an imitation of the heathen temple and altar ministrants,—a view which finds its chief support in the position of the acolytes and door-keepers. He affirms that the fundamental thought which determined the development of the minor orders was entirely different from that which Harnack assumes. It was not because they ministered to a sacred person (the priest) or about a sacred place (the Church building) that a sacred character was *ascribed* to them; but rather because, for all, even the subordinate ministrations at the Eucharist, only spiritually apt persons were *chosen*,—persons, consequently, who might be expected to rise to the higher

orders, as the subordinate ministrants of the heathen cults never did. The fundamental idea which determined the development of the minor orders, says Sohm, was the early Christian principle that the "sacrifice" of the Church, the Eucharist, must be "pure" (*Didache*, xiv. 1, 3). From this it was deduced that all who take part in the administration of the Eucharist must be pure, "worthy of the Lord." The principle was applied at first only to the bishops, presbyters and deacons; but it was finally applied, as the importance of the Eucharist increased under the influence of the Catholic idea of sacrifice (about the end of the second century), to all the ministers that had any, though a less immediate relation to the Eucharist (subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, and doorkeepers). The idea was that all of these functions, which were more or less closely related to the Eucharist, ought not to be performed except by persons that were formally appointed by the bishop, after their moral fitness had been passed upon by the congregation.

For the origin and history of the lectorate I may refer to Harnack's valuable study. For the development of the minor orders in general I refer to Sohm's work, giving here only a brief abstract of his theory, such as will serve to show what one may expect to find by turning to his book.

There is general agreement as to the fact that the subdiaconate was first introduced at Rome, for it was there alone, apparently, that the symbolical limitation of the number of deacons was regarded as a necessity. It seems that in Rome the subdeacons too were limited to seven, merely because they bore a similar name. Harnack himself (pp. 102, 103) establishes the grounds upon which Sohm builds his theory. He calls attention to the notice in the *Catalogus Liberianus*: Hic (Fabianus) divisit regiones diaconibus. That is, the Roman bishop Fabian, shortly after the year 236, distributed among the deacons the 14 regions into which Augustus had divided the city. Harnack thinks it unlikely that Fabian, in thus adapting the ecclesiastical administration to the civil, should assign two regions to each of the seven deacons. It is certainly plausible to suppose that, as the number of deacons could not be

increased, seven subdeacons were appointed expressly to fill up the number fourteen, so that a single region might be allotted to each. This is confirmed by the *Liber Pontificalis*, which adds to the notice of the *Catal. Liber.*: et fecit septem subdiaconos. A more unimpeachable witness is the letter of the Roman bishop Cornelius, addressed in the year 250 to Fabius of Antioch (Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 43:11), which gives the number of Roman deacons and subdeacons respectively as seven. Cornelius also gives the number of presbyters as 44, the number of acolytes as 42, while the exorcists and lectors with doorkeepers numbered 52. In the further notice that the number of widows with sick and needy persons that were supported by the Church exceeded 1500, we have a hint of the extent of the diaconal labor of ministering to the poor. Harnack himself remarks that the number of acolytes (42) is exactly divisible by 14, giving three for each region, and he acknowledges that at a later date there were undoubtedly acolytes appropriated to the several regions. But the obvious consequence of these facts he refuses to admit, considering the name itself a sufficient obstacle to the view which regards the acolyte as merely a subordinate sort of deacon.

Sohm on the contrary finds the name anything but unfavorable to this view. The subdiaconate originated at Rome because seven deacons were not sufficient for the whole diaconal work of the city. But the subdeacons were likewise limited to seven by the same symbolical consideration, and we may well imagine that 14 deacons and subdeacons were still insufficient. If other diaconal officers were needed, it is obvious why they should be given a neutral name ("follower") which would not suggest any limitation of the number. The subdeacon was received in the East, but not the acolyte. The reason is obvious. In the East there was no limitation of the number of subdeacons; the symbolical consideration was not regarded, and consequently these officers might be increased as convenience prompted. The acolyte was essentially the same as the subdeacon, viz. a subordinate sort of deacon. The office was established at Rome as a way out of the practical embarrassment occasioned by the symbolical limitation of the sub-

diaconate: where no such limitation existed the office was superfluous.

Sohm notes moreover that even in the West, and in Rome itself, subdeacon and acolyte were regarded, in the year 400 and later, as officers of the same sort. Pope Zosimus required that he who entered the ecclesiastical career in mature years should serve five years as lector or exorcist, then four years as *acolyte* or *subdeacon*.<sup>17</sup> The service of acolyte is equivalent to that of subdeacon. The offices of acolyte and subdeacon are distinct, but originally they signified one and the same grade in the ministry of the Church, one and the same *ordo*. This explains why it is that the acolyte comes immediately after the subdeacon and before the exorcist, etc.

Sohm shows further, from the texts which have just been cited, that at Rome, as late as the fifth century, the offices of exorcist, lector, and door-keeper constituted a single grade or order.<sup>18</sup> Evidently for the reason that these offices, distinct as

<sup>17</sup> Zosimus, *ep. 9 ad Hesychium*, c. 5 (A. D. 418): *major jam et grandævus . . . sive inter lectores sive inter exorcistas quinquennio teneatur: exinde acoluthus vel subdiaconus quatuor annis; et sic ad benedictionem diaconatus . . . accedat. Exinde . . . presbyterii sacerdotium poterit promereri. De quo loco . . . summum pontificatum sperare debet.* The letter of Zosimus is founded on the decretal of Siricius of the year 385 (cc. 13, 14). Here we read (c. 13) that after one has served as lector or exorcist *acoluthus et subdiaconus esse debet*. These words too are to be understood as permitting an *alternative*, as the epistle of Zosimus puts beyond a doubt. He shall be "acolyte and subdeacon." The one is equal to the other. Hence too in the decretal of Siricius, c. 14, a single term is prescribed for the service of acolyte and subdeacon: *per quinquennium aliud acoluthus et subdiaconus fiat, et sic ad diaconium . . . provehatur.* It suffices if for five years he has served as acolyte, he has thereby performed a subdiaconal ministry.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the epistle of Cornelius which classes lectors, exorcists, and door-keepers together. More especially, Siricius, *ep. 1 ad Himerium*, c. 13 (A. D. 385): *Quicumque itaque se ecclesie vovit obsequiis a sua infantia, ante pubertatis annos baptizari et lectorum debet ministerio sociari. Qui accessu adolescentie usque ad tricesimum ætatis annum, si probabiliter vixerit . . . acoluthus et subdiaconus esse debet; postque ad diaconii gradum . . . accedat. Unde si ultra quinque annos laudabiliter ministrarit, congrue presbyterium consequatur. Exinde post decennium episcopalem cathedram poterit adipisci, c. 14: Qui vero jam ætate gradaevus . . . ex laico ad sacram militiam pervenire festinat,*



they were in themselves, were all alike lay offices, whereas the offices of acolyte and subdeacon, as an extension of the diaconate, were essentially clerical offices. The ecclesiastical career did not necessarily, nor even as a rule begin with the office of ostiarius. This grade was passed by serving *either* as lector *or* exorcist, advancing thence to the office of acolyte *or* subdeacon.

Consequently there were not, as has hitherto been supposed, five *ordines minores* established at Rome in the third century, but only two, — two grades, that is, of subordinate clergy. Subdeacons and acolytes composed the higher of these two orders; exorcists, lectors, and door-keepers, the lower. It is commonly regarded as a point of difference between the Eastern Church and the Western, that the former has ever had but two orders of minor clergy, the subdiaconate and the lectorate. We see, however, from the above that the earlier Roman arrangement agreed substantially with that of the Eastern Church. In Rome, too, only two lower grades of clerical service had to be passed to reach the diaconate, — beginning usually with the lectorate, and serving then in the capacity of subdeacon (or acolyte). Only, in the East the office of singer was treated as equivalent to the lectorate, while the offices of exorcist and door-keeper were so reckoned in the West; and, further, the office of acolyte, as the equivalent of the subdiaconate, was lacking in the East.

## § 23, PRESBYTERS<sup>1</sup>

Incidentally it has already been necessary to consider, upon several occasions, and at considerable length, the nature and position of the elders in the primitive Church. In § 21, pp. 346–365, the essential character of this class of elder disciples was discussed,

. . . eo quo baptizatur tempore statim *lectorum aut exorcistarum* numero societur, . . . expleto biennio per quinquennium aliud acolythus et subdiaconus fiat.

<sup>1</sup> This section is in the main an abbreviation of the corresponding sections of Sohm's work, §§ 11 and 12, pp. 137–156.

together with the informal functions of presidency and instruction which they performed. The *place* of the elders in the Eucharistic assembly, which gradually led to their formal instalment as officers, has been described in §19, pp. 276, 277, 286, 290–297. Of what has already been said the sum is this: The elders or presbyters—that is, the disciples of long standing, ripe Christian experience, and confirmed character—were naturally accorded a special honor and influence in the community, and formed from the beginning a vaguely defined class, the most ostensible mark of which was the fact that they enjoyed seats of honor at the Eucharistic table together with the president—apostle, prophet, or bishop, as the case might be. The dignity of the presbyter was increased, and his position more formally defined, when the number of disciples at the principal assembly rendered it impossible for all to sit at the Eucharistic table. While the older custom was still fresh in the memory, and still practised in the smaller assemblies, it would have been a manifest ineptitude had the president (bishop) sat at the table alone. The bishop represented the Lord, who sat *with* his disciples (the Apostles) at the table. Consequently, with the bishop the disciples must ever continue to sit—not all of them, for that was become impossible, but at least the presbyters, who constituted as it were the kernel of the congregation.<sup>2</sup> The only other persons that had a place

<sup>2</sup> Besides the passages from Ignatius quoted above on pp. 290, 291, 294, 295, we have various indications of the position of the presbyters in the Eucharistic assembly. Rev. 4:4,—the elders that appear in the heavenly assembly of worship have seats that are arranged circularly (κυκλόθεν) about the throne of God. This is evidently a transcript of the arrangement of the earthly assembly. The third century source of *Apost. Const.* II. c. 26: “Let the bishop have the first seat among you in

in the immediate vicinity of the altar were the deacons; and they, as accorded with the original character of their function, continued to *stand*.

From the position and functions of the bishop, presbyters, and deacons at the Eucharist grew up the notion of the clergy. Out of the order of the Eucharistic assembly the whole order and organization of the Church was developed. In all assemblies of Christendom — e. g. at a later time in synods and councils — the bishops and presbyters sat and the deacons stood. Bishops and deacons have been already considered: it remains to be shown that the functions of the presbyters, too, were almost exclusively defined by their position in the Eucharistic assembly. Being by nature the bishop's peers, the class from which he himself was chosen, their regular presence with the bishop at the altar as his assessors, constituted them

God's place, and let the deacons stand by him." 1 *Clem. ad Cor.* 40: "For unto the high-priest his proper services have been assigned, and to the priests their proper *place* is appointed, and upon the levites their proper ministrations are laid." The Eucharistic celebration is here treated as a parallel to the Old Testament temple-service. The λειτουργία (administration of worship) is ascribed to the high-priest (*i. e.* the bishop), the διακονία (ministry at the Eucharist) to the levites (deacons), and the appropriate *place of honor* (ἴδιος ὁ τόπος) to the priests (presbyters). Hermas (*Vis.* III. 1:8, 9) desires that the presbyters shall have the place of honor next the "Ecclesia"; but he is instructed that on the right of the Ecclesia the martyrs shall sit, and on the left, Hermas himself, the prophet. It is clear from this that the rule which actually prevailed ascribed to the presbyters the seats of honor on the right and left of the bishop. Hence in *Vis.* III. 9:7 the presbyters are called the πρωτοκαθεδρίται. So, too, by Ignatius they are called προκαθήμενοι (*Magn.* 6). Source A of the *Apost. Church Order* distinguishes expressly between the presbyters "on the right" and "on the left" of the bishop at the altar. The seat on the right is here, as evidently it is for Hermas, the seat of higher honor. For the distinction between the presbyters "on the right" and "on the left," see lib. I. § 19, p. 25 of Rahmanus' ed. of *Testamentum Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, Moguntiae, 1899. Later references to the position of the presbyters are exceedingly numerous.

his natural body of advisers—his council. As the bishop's assessors, they took part with him in receiving and superintending the gifts of the people; and they were active with him in maintaining order in the assembly, and in disposing of the cases of discipline which this might involve. Being naturally the leading members of the community, and representing the whole congregation at the altar, their decision or assent was assumed to express the decision or assent of the congregation in respect to the many matters which, when the Church was grown large, could not conveniently be referred to the popular vote. In this capacity—as the representative kernel of the congregation—they had even power *over* the bishop: it was they that appointed him, and, having appointed him, not only aided and advised him, but responsibly superintended his acts.

We may note in passing why it was, that, as popular participation in the government of Church affairs lapsed into desuetude, no system of lay *representation*, such as is so marked a feature of our modern ecclesiastical governments, was developed to take the place of the popular voice, and register the assent of the congregation. The *presbyters* were the representatives of the people,—not by formal deputation, but by the more secure warrant of natural leadership. They were the leaders of the community, whose judgment the people might reasonably be expected to follow,—whose decision, therefore, might be assumed to be the decision of the people. They were no less duly representative of the people because they finally gained a place among the clergy. For the clergy were not thought of as a separate estate within the Church, with interests and aims dissimilar or contrary to those



of the people; and least of all could the presbyters be supposed to be alienated from the common life, since throughout the second century they were still generally dependent upon the ordinary avocations of the lay world for their material support.

The position of the presbyters became defined and formalized by the privilege they enjoyed of occupying the seats of honor at the Eucharist. Their position became an office, and their name an official designation which was henceforth ordinarily applied only to those that were formally recognized as admissible to such seats. This implied formal *appointment* to office, which was effected, like appointment to the episcopate and diaconate, through election and the laying on of hands. Originally an appointed presbyter was *ipso facto* a bishop. But the development here in question was subsequent to the establishment of the monarchical episcopate, that is to say, it occurred during the first half of the second century: henceforth there was only one bishop even in the largest communities, and appointment to the presbyterate—*i. e.* to the honor of the chief seats beside the bishop—could not be confounded with appointment to the episcopate.

But even ordination to the presbyterate did not at first confer upon the presbyters an inalienable *right* to the seats of honor at the Eucharist, nor was ordination an indispensable condition of this honor. These two facts are very closely related. It was not the ordained presbyters alone that might claim the chief seats at the Eucharist; the same distinction might be claimed by other honorables—especially the martyrs (or confessors)—whose leading position in the community was clearly enough defined without ordination.

The result was that even the ordained presbyters had in certain circumstances to give place to other distinguished members of the congregation. It was first at Rome, as Sohm thinks, that the presbyters were clothed with legal privileges, and so acquired an *exclusive* right to the seat of honor at the Eucharist. At all events, it is evident that the development was a gradual one, and it is natural to suppose that it was first accomplished in the greater centers of Church life, where many were ambitious of the chief seats, and where the independent parochial functions of the presbyters were first called into exercise.

L. I gather together here the detailed proof of the propositions briefly enunciated in the last two paragraphs.

The earliest evidence of ordination (appointment) to the presbyterate we find in Ignatius and Hermas. It is enough for the present purpose that both authorities belong to the first half of the second century, — the epistles of Ignatius, however, may confidently be referred to the years 110–117, and the writings of Hermas belong probably to the year 140 *circa*. Ignatius, *Philad.* inscr., “with the bishop and the presbyters . . . and the deacons, appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ, whom after his own will he confirmed and established by his Holy Spirit.” The testimony of Hermas is not so direct, and it has to be gathered from scattered hints, but on the whole it is exceedingly significant of the gradual development of the official notion of the presbytery. In *Vis.* III. 1: 8, 9, Hermas has a revelation that the prophets and martyrs have in principle as good a right to the chief seats on either side of the bishop as have the presbyters, — this is substantially the meaning of his symbolical vision. It is evident that the presbyters were already formally appointed, and legally — at Rome, it may be, exclusively — in possession of the chief seats. But Hermas seems to be writing at a time when the development was only just accomplished. The older order was not yet forgotten, and some (including the prophet Hermas) were unwilling

to acquiesce in the exclusive rights of the presbyters to the seats of honor at the Eucharist. Cf. the dissension between the "leaders" (e. g. prophets) and the occupants of the chief seats (the presbyters) in *Vis.* III. 9: 7; and the strife *περὶ πρωτείων* in *Sim.* VIII. 7: 4.

Here is a change indeed from the early order! Originally the prophets and teachers were the born leaders of the Church: now they aspire after no higher honor than to sit among the presbyters "on the left hand" of the bishop,—and even this is not conceded them except in a vision. The right of the ordained presbyters was by this time unquestioned in the Roman Church, the only question that remained was, whether other notables might sit with them. It appears as though Hermas were consoling himself in a vision for what was practically denied him in real life. When told to "sit down here," he objected that this was rather the right of the presbyters. The command being repeated, he essays to sit upon the right side, but is admonished that the seats upon the right are "for those who have already proved pleasing to God and have suffered for his name." But even the martyrs, we may suppose, were by this time (in Rome) hardly suffered to occupy the presbyters' seats except in a vision. The wisest part was to reconcile oneself to the existing state of affairs. So, in *Mand.* XI. 12, Hermas counts it a sign of a false prophet to desire an eminent seat. The true prophet (*Mand.* XI. 8) "is meek and peaceable and lowly in mind, and separate from all evil and lust of this vain world, and makes himself more lowly than all men." The same honor which Hermas desired for the martyrs and prophets was by Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* VI. 13: 106) desired — and as certainly not obtained — for the "gnostic": the gnostic is the true presbyter and deacon of the Church, "not ordained by men," but meriting none the less a seat of eminence. Clement here assumes the ordination of the presbyters, and implies that ordination was actually an indispensable condition of the enjoyment of the chief seats "on earth." Ordination to the presbyterate is assumed likewise by Tertullian (*circa* 200), in a passage which will be considered below. And about the same time by Hippolytus (*Philosoph.* IX. 12), whose witness applies especially

to Rome: "with Callistus they began to *appoint* to the clerical order (καθίστασθαι εἰς κλήρους) bishops and presbyters and deacons who were twice and thrice married." In the middle of the third century we have the same testimony in the letter of Cornelius (Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 43): "through the favor of the bishop who ordained him (laid hands upon him) to the order of the presbyterate."

But the rights of the presbyters were not every where interpreted so exclusively as they were at Rome before the middle of the second century (according to Hermas), or at Alexandria about the end of that century (according to Clement). During the last quarter of the second century the martyrs of Lyons called the presbyter Irenaeus their "brother and partner" (κοινωνόν Euseb. *H. E.* V. 4), — a phrase which it is not easy to understand, unless the martyrs in Gaul shared the chief seats with the presbyters. The Canons of Hippolytus (*circa* 200) actually prescribe it as a rule, that a martyr (one who has testified to his faith before a tribunal, and suffered punishment) merits the presbyterial rank *without ordination*, vi. § 43: Quando quis dignus est, qui stet coram tribunali propter fidem et afficiatur poena propter Christum, postea autem indulgentia liber dimittitur, talis postea meretur *gradum presbyterialem* coram deo, non secundum ordinationem quae fit ab episcopo (God gives him his position, he needs not the bishop's ordination), immo *confessio est ordinatio ejus*. Quod si vero episcopus fit, ordinetur. He needs ordination if he would be a bishop: the rank of presbyter ought to be conceded him without ordination. The "rank of presbyter" can only mean the presbyter's seat of honor at the Eucharist, for the martyr as such has, of course, no office. The same rule is repeated in the *Egyptian Church Order*, c. 34 (see Achelis, pp. 67, 68, in *Texte u. Untersuch.* VI. 4). Both these "orders" add that a confessor who has suffered no pains "is worthy of the presbyterate, but he is to be ordained by the bishop." Evidently, at the time of the redaction of the *Can. Hipp.* in the East there was a tendency to greater circumspection in admitting to the honor of the presbyterate without ordination. According to the parallel in the *Apost. Const.* VIII. c. 23, the confessor is indeed "worthy of great honor," "but if he is



needed in the episcopate or the presbyterate or the diaconate he is to be ordained." If a confessor takes this honor without ordination, he is to be thrust out, as one who has denied Christ.

Tertullian, *de praescr. haeret.* c. 41 (*circa* 203): Ordinationes eorum (the heretics) temeriae, leves, inconstantes . . . *hodie presbyter qui cras laicus*, nam *et laicis sacerdotalia munera injungunt*. This important passage throws light upon several points which are here of interest. (1) It proves that in Africa (and Rome) about the year 200, not only were the presbyters ordained, but their ordination was recognized by the Catholics as conferring a permanent right to their office, — we may add, when we consider the implications of the passage, that it conferred an *exclusive* right to the seats of honor at the Eucharist. (2) It proves that the heretics likewise ordained their presbyters, and therefore the custom of ordaining to the presbyterate must have been commonly adopted before the greater Gnostic organizations separated from the Church. (3) But the heretics still adhered to the earlier customs: ordination gave the presbyter no *right* to his seat of honor. "He who to-day is presbyter, to-morrow is a layman." If to-day he sits at the altar, to-morrow he may find himself obliged to sit with the people. Here it is clear that to appear in the rôle of a presbyter is equivalent to occupying the seat of honor in the assembly — only thus is it possible to conceive of an ordained presbyter in the Church being now "presbyter" and now "layman." The passage adds: "for upon the laity too they impose priestly functions." Here we have the reason for the foregoing. Even a layman (*i. e.* one who is not ordained) whom the congregation wishes to honor — a martyr, a prophet, or the like — may sit with the bishop at the Eucharistic table, and for him a presbyter may have to yield his place.

Originally the presbyterate did not denote an office in any proper sense, but only a position of honor in the assembly. The bishop had a *λειτουργία*, the conduct of the Eucharist; the deacon a *διακονία* in the technical

sense, the function of service at the Eucharist; the presbyter merely a *τόπος*, a place of honor, as assessor with the bishop at the Eucharist.<sup>3</sup> The individual presbyter had no definite functions, he appears simply as a member of the presbytery.<sup>4</sup> It must be supposed that the development of the monarchical episcopate devolved upon the presbyters of the great cities many of the original functions of the bishop. Only thus can we conceive of the regular maintenance of several assemblies within the one local Church (episcopal see). But it appears clearly that in many places, perhaps throughout the greater part of the Church, even the ordained presbyters, as late as the third century, were not yet regarded as Church officers in the proper sense, and exercised no distinctive ministry.<sup>5</sup> Only so is it

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Hence in Ignatius we have no mention of individual presbyters, but only of the presbytery, — *Ephes.* 2:2; 4:1; 20:2; *Magn.* 13:1; *Trall.* 2:2; 7:2; 13:2; *Philad.* 4; 7:1; *Smyrn.* 8:1; 12:2.

<sup>5</sup> Source B of the *Apost. Church Order* (latter half of the second century) recognizes, like Ignatius, only two sorts of officers in the Church, bishops and deacons; and it proposes to the faithful deacon the prospect of becoming — not presbyter, but — bishop (§ 6): “for they that have well performed the diaconal ministry may gain for themselves the pastoral place,” Harnack, *Texte*, II. 5, p. 26. The same relation appears even more clearly, if possible, in the *Syrian Didaskalia* (the third century source of *Apost. Const.* II.). Here again we have but two offices, the episcopate and the diaconate. The bishop administers Church affairs with the aid of the deacons: cf. *Source of Apost. Const.* II. 10, “the bishop and the deacons . . . and the flock”; c. 17, discipline is administered by “the bishop with his deacons”; “being of one mind among yourselves, O bishops and deacons, watchfully shepherd the people in harmony”; — for other citations see Sohm, p. 143, note 14. While in this source the bishops and deacons are mentioned with very great frequency, the presbyters are rarely referred to. They are the council of the bishop and the crown of the Church, they can administer baptism in the bishop’s place (*Didaskalia*, III. 16), but they have no definite ministry. Hence the decisive fact that according to this source the presbyters were not ordinarily entitled to a share of the Church offerings: *Didaskalia*, II. 28, the widow receives a single, the (bishop and)

possible to understand how, until the third century, the martyrs were ranked as presbyters. The martyr as such had of course no office.

But the very fact that the presbyters, and they alone, sat with the bishop at the altar, must soon, and perhaps from the beginning, have put them in the way of performing certain practical functions.

The most illuminating evidence we have of the character of the presbyter's functions is a document of the latter part of the second century which Harnack calls Source A of the Apostolic Church Order, discriminating it from the later constituents of this third century work.<sup>6</sup> The section relative to the presbyters

deacon a double portion, "but if any one wish to honor the presbyters also, let him give to them a double portion as to the deacons." The presbyters thus received a share of the gifts only at the express desire of the giver. The rule of the Pastoral Epistles (cf. above, p. 354, note 19), that "the well-presiding elders" should have a double share of the offerings, had not every where become operative even by the middle of the third century. Why? Because the elders as such performed no official ministry in the Ecclesia. — The testimony that has been here cited proves the more instructive when one compares with it the *alterations* of the earlier source made by the interpolator of the *Apost. Const.* about the middle of the fourth century. According to *Apost. Const.* II. c. 28, the presbyters have now, like the deacons, an assured share of the gifts, as something "they earn by the word of teaching." Their official functions are enumerated: III. c. 20, "to teach, to offer, to baptize, to bless the people" (cf. VIII. cc. 28, 46). Over and over again the presbyters are introduced into the text, being enumerated in what was then the customary order, between bishops and deacons (e. g. III. cc. 7, 20). This is one of the characteristic alterations made by the same interpolator (Harnack, *Proleg. to Didache*, pp. 244 sqq.) in the Ignatian epistles and in Book VII. of the Apostolic Constitutions, — e. g. *Apost. Const.* VII. cc. 22, 26, 29, 31; Pseudoignatius *ad Tars.* 8, Philad. 4, Smyrn. 9, Her. 3. — At Rome, by the middle of the third century, the presbyters already enjoyed a well established right to a share of the offerings, and occupied a definite place in the official hierarchy (Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 43:11), cf. Cyprian, *ep.* 39: 5, *ut et sportulis idem* (two confessors that had been made lectors) *cum presbyteris honoretur et divisiones mensurnas aequatis quantatibus partiantur.*

<sup>6</sup> *Texte u. Untersuch.* II. 5, pp. 10 sqq.

begins with a fanciful comparison between them and the four and twenty elders in the Apocalyptic vision, ascribing to the heavenly service certain traits which are evidently a reflection of the earthly assembly. § 2. “(There shall be two)<sup>7</sup> presbyters; for four and twenty presbyters there are, twelve on the right and twelve on the left; for they on the right receive the bowls from the archangels and offer them to the Lord, but they on the left keep watch<sup>8</sup> over the multitude of the angels. The presbyters must therefore be well advanced in years (in the world),<sup>9</sup> refraining in a seemly measure from intercourse with women, readily sharing with the brotherhood, not respecting the persons of men, fellow initiates<sup>10</sup> of the bishop and fellow combatants, assisting him in assembling the congregation, having a willing mind towards the pastor. The presbyters on the right shall take care for the bishops at the altar, in order that they (the bishops) may honor and be honored<sup>11</sup> so much as may be due; the presbyters on the left shall take care for the congregation, that it may be orderly and without disturbance, after it has first been instructed in all subjection. If any one, having been warned, answers presumptuously, those at the altar<sup>12</sup> shall unite and by common counsel adjudge

<sup>7</sup> Very small communities (probably in Egypt) are contemplated, in some of which there are not found twelve men to elect a bishop, § 1. It appears to be intended that there shall be two presbyters *at least*, and that in any case there shall be an even number, so that they may be equally distributed on the right hand and on the left.

<sup>8</sup> ἐπέχουσι, “they keep watch,” — with Bickell *contra* Harnack.

<sup>9</sup> The phrase is redundant.

<sup>10</sup> συμμύστας, a term which refers to the rites of the pagan mysteries. It here signifies the presbyters' close relation to the cultus, particularly to the Eucharist. The following phrases indicate their part in discipline.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. above, note I, pp. 328 sq.

<sup>12</sup> The bishop and deacons together with all the presbyters, — as a court of appeal which cannot be accused of partiality, “respect of persons.”



to such an one the meet penalty, in order that the others also may fear, lest they should accept any man's person, and it spread like a cancer and all be seized by it."

Though this source describes the functions of the presbyters in the latter part of the second century, it evidently contemplates small primitive communities which have not outgrown the single episcopal assembly and the simple institutions which centered in it, and there is nothing here which does not perfectly comport with the earliest forms of Church government. We have seen that the single president of the Eucharist (whether apostle or bishop) was a primitive institution; and what functions the primitive elders performed with reference to the president we are at a loss to imagine, unless they were such as are described here.<sup>13</sup> But on the other hand, while we can readily believe that such institutions were maintained in the small and primitive communities of Egypt, and perhaps in all Churches that had not outgrown the single assembly, it is impossible to believe that this description reflects the contemporary practice in Rome, for example, or in many of the other great cities where a single assembly had long been out of the question. Alexandria, it appears, had tenaciously adhered to the traditional custom, maintaining one principal assembly which counted as an assembly

<sup>13</sup> This document explains why Hermas regarded the seats at the right the place of highest honor (cf. p. 388): the administration of God's property is (next to the administration of the Eucharist) the highest honor in the Church. There must consequently have been a similar distinction between the presbyters on the right and on the left in the Roman Church in the early part of the second century. In 1 *Clem.* 40:5 (note 2, above) the comparison which is instituted between the "priests" and the presbyters may be due to the fact that the latter had a part in the administration of the offerings. This apparently explains what we read in Acts 11:30, that the offerings were sent "to the presbyters" at Jerusalem.

of the whole local Church, with one bishop, of course, as its president, and a presbytery which was rigidly limited to twelve (six on each side of the bishop) after the number of the Apostles.<sup>14</sup> But other great Churches, notably the Church at Rome, did not suffer their development to be hampered by this symbolical limitation of the presbyterate. They probably had more presbyters than were needed, or could conveniently be seated, at the bishop's Eucharist; and the individual presbyters consequently acquired more or less independent functions as parochial pastors, though collectively, as a presbytery, they still had the same relation to the discipline of the whole Church, and the same oversight of the bishop's administration, that we find traced to their origin by the Source we are here studying.

According to Source A, the functions of the presbyters are as plainly referable to the character of the Eucharistic celebration as are the functions of the bishop and deacons. The elders were originally an informally defined class in the community, who exercised such independent functions of instruction and leadership as their personal character and capacity warranted. These functions they did not lose even after the Catholic development, and what has been said on pp. 346-365 of the primitive elders, may serve to indicate the great variety of informal services which the appointed elders of the second century were expected to exercise in the Church outside of the assembly. But it was the place of honor which the elders occupied in the Eucharistic assembly which ultimately gave them an official rank and from first to last defined the character of their official functions. In Source A we find the presbyters at the Eucharist performing two several func-

<sup>14</sup> Cf. note B, p. 23.

tions, which are evidently the root and explanation of the whole subsequent development of the presbyterate. The presbyters on the right have the oversight of the bishop and of the episcopal administration of the gifts, seeing to it that he himself is duly "honored" by a share of the Church property, and that fair distribution is made to the other recipients of the Church's bounty. The presbyters on the left have the oversight of the congregation, and share with the bishop and the whole presbytery the decision of questions of discipline. We must suppose, as an addition to our text, that all such disciplinary decisions required the ratification of the congregation. This was at all events the rule even at a much later period in case the discipline proceeded to the length of excommunication.

The features which are interpolated in the Apocalyptic picture of the heavenly assembly can be drawn from no other source than the current ecclesiastical practice in the earthly assemblies. The parallel which is instituted between the four and twenty elders in heaven and the earthly elders obliges us to assume that the functions attributed to the former were actually performed by the latter, even where the parallel is not expressly drawn in the text. Hence we must understand that "those on the right" received the "bowls" (the various offerings of the people) "from the archangels" (the deacons?) and presented them to God (the bishop who occupied God's place). What is expressly said is, that "the presbyters on the right" take care for the *bishop*<sup>15</sup> (especially in the matter of the

<sup>15</sup> The bishops are mentioned in the plural because these ordinances have in view a number of congregations. It is clear from other passages that this Source contemplates only a single bishop in each congregation, cf. Harnack, p. 13, note 21.

gifts), that he may receive due "honor" and give it. The function here ascribed to the presbyters is a double one. As the bishop's inferiors in place they are solicitous for his dignity and careful to see that he receives a due share of the Church's offerings. But they are at the same time the honorables of the community, they occupy their place at the Eucharistic table as the representatives of the whole congregation, and as such they exercise a superintendence over the bishop's administration, checking any tendency to partiality or autocracy, especially in regard to the distribution of the Church property, the most delicate office which the bishop has to discharge as God's steward. The presbyters here appear as the council of the bishop occupying a highly honorable position, but one which involves no independent executive powers.

"The presbyters on the left" have oversight over the congregation, but cases of discipline which originate with them are referred to all those who have places of honor at the altar—the whole presbytery with the bishop and deacons.

The bishop's presidency at the Eucharist implies the presidency in every assembly of the Church, therefore in particular in this assembly at the altar for the purpose of adjudging discipline. The deacons too are included in this council, according to the literal reading of the text, for they were certainly amongst "those at the altar," though their position there was formally one of service. This is put beyond a doubt by § 4 of this Source, where it is prescribed that "three deacons shall be appointed, for it is written, Upon three shall every word be established," — *i. e.* the deacons are to serve as witnesses in cases of spiritual discipline. The deacons, however, are the ministers of the bishop, not of the



presbyters, and it is to him they tender their witness. This circumstance unites with the above to prove the bishop's presidency in courts of discipline: at this time, just as a century later according to the *Syrian Didaskalia*, II. c. 47, the deacons *served* the bishop (with their witness), and the presbyters *counselled* him.

The bishop performs the service of the prophets and teachers in the matter of admonition and discipline. But the bishop is no prophet, and cannot speak with the prophet's authority. Hence, not only does his judgment need the ultimate assent of the people, but even before it is pronounced it is well for him to take counsel with the presbytery, so that acting upon common counsel there may be no ground for the charge of partiality or respect of persons, and all may entertain a wholesome dread of the bishop's judgments when they see the leading men of the congregation united with him, — lest upon any sign of weakness or dissension in the leaders, or upon the mere suspicion of unfairness, the nascent spirit of rebellion spread like a cancer and all be contaminated.

Again we find the presbytery acting as the council of the bishop, — not performing any independent functions of judgment, yet exercising as his assessors a substantial control over the bishop's administration of discipline. The government and discipline of the Church is strong so long as the presbyters are "in tune with the bishop like the strings with the lyre."

Thus we see that in all points the order of the Eucharistic assembly defined the organization of the Church. The order of the primitive Eucharistic assembly was the matrix of the Catholic organization. The bishop at the head conducts the Eucharistic celebration, the presby-

ters at his side represent the congregation, the deacons serve as his helpers. The picture we must form of the Eucharistic assembly in the latter half of the first century — from the first establishment of the episcopal office — is precisely the same that we find three centuries or so later. The many attempts to discover the origin of the Catholic form of organization (particularly the single episcopate) in the early part of the second century, have proved futile because the *form* was already furnished by the primitive Eucharistic assembly. The primitive order at the Eucharist explains the Catholic organization, — nay, more, it proves that between the primitive and the Catholic organization there does not exist the difference which is universally assumed. In outward form nothing was altered. And yet how great was the difference! The Eucharistic assembly of the following centuries rests upon a legal constitution, and is consequently informed by the spirit of Catholicism; while the primitive assembly recognized no legal ordinances, and knew only the spirit of love as the bond of peace. The bishop was appointed from the body of the elders and with their assent. Upon their continued assent depended his continuance in office. The occupancy of the seats of honor of the elders was as yet determined by no outward criterion, and consequently no one had a formal right to these seats. The occupancy varied as elders, confessors, prophets, or teachers chanced in varying numbers to be present in the assembly, and as one or another was accounted most worthy of this honor. Above all, as there was no close corporation of elders, so there was *no definite congregation* constituting the assembly which met under the presidency of a particular bishop. Even the principal assembly, which was the basis of the subsequent development, had only a matter

of fact existence. Beside it were other assemblies. The principal assembly itself varied in the number of its adherents. The celebration of the Eucharist was possible, not merely in one assembly and under a particular bishop, but in every assembly of disciples. The notion of the Ecclesia was not yet formalized. The maxim still held good: where two or three are assembled in Christ's name, there is Christendom, the Ecclesia. Hence the lack of corporate legal form, hence the fact that there were no official rights, and that there was no congregation in the legal sense.

The only point where we find the conditions for a permanent official order is the principal assembly, and in that assembly the prime fact was the leading rôle of the elders. Upon the high character and importance of the elders rests the episcopal order in the Eucharistic celebration: the elders concede to the bishop his place, and their assent is the warrant which gives practical force to his official acts. But what if the rôle of leadership be denied the elders? What if the "younger" revolt against the "elder"? This was the situation at Corinth which occasioned St. Clement's epistle, and the case was certainly not a solitary one. The authority which the elders exercised over the episcopate presupposes the absence of a legal constitution, the absence of legal rights inherent in this office. But the same lack of a legal constitution imperilled also the position of the elders themselves. There existed no *rights* of a corporate college of elders as over against the younger. All the authority which the elders exercised belonged to them only as leaders and representatives of the *assembly*. What then if the assembly refuse obedience to the counsels and directions of the elders?

This moment was bound to come ; — and when it came the introduction of a legal order, the definition of official rights, may well have appeared an inevitable necessity. *But with the introduction of ecclesiastical law primitive Christianity was transformed into Catholicism.*









## Date Due

[illegible]



9.7.16

Louise, Walter

The church and its  
organization

DATE	ISSUED TO
1950	
Jan 24	O.C.
May 18 '51	Q.M.

